

3 By the peace we experience.

"And the peace of God ... will keep your hearts and minds" (Philippians 4:7)

Refuse to live with doubts and fear, have faith and confidence in the Lord. However if we are to be more than conquerors then we must take what is being offered Jesus said very explicitly *"My peace I give unto you "* with the rider *" Let not your heart be troubled". (John 14:27)* The implication is that we have to accept the peace Jesus offers. As I write so I keep humming a chorus song to myself -maybe you could do the same *"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace .. whose mind is stayed on Thee"* A simple melody reflecting Isaiah 26:3. Our circumstances constantly change, even spin out of control at times. However God never changes and nothing spins out of His control. He is the God who can handle anything. The challenge is for us to declare *" our thoughts are fixed on You"* That is the key to perfect peace -it is more than enough !

4 By the praises we offer

"But I will hope continually and will yet praise Thee more and more" Psalm 71:14

No long faces. No blame game. No pity me club. No giving in. No negative attitudes. It is the challenge *" I will bless the Lord at all times, His praise shall continually be in my mouth" (Psalm 34:1)* Every night before I switch off the light the last thing I do is to think of three things from the day for which I need to thank and praise God. Try it for yourself. **DPS**

Did you know about today's hymn writer Joseph Scriven

Not far from Port Hope, Ontario you will find a monument marking the place where Scriven lies inscribed with the words of this great hymn he wrote. His life was filled with personal tragedy and so many difficulties. As a young man in Ireland his fiancée drowned accidentally on the eve of their wedding. Soon after Scriven set sail for Canada destined to live alone but with Jesus as his close Friend.. Back in Ireland his mother became ill. He did not have the resources to help her or return home . So he sent her this reminder that the most perfect of friends, Jesus Himself, was nearby. Later when he too was taken ill a visiting friend saw the hymn scribbled on a piece of paper by his bedside *"Did you write this ?"* Scriven answered *"Well not completely - the Lord and I did between us !"*

Please Note: As soon as we can return to Sunday morning worship we will let you know.

ROCHFORD CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

Welcome to

CHURCH AT HOME

Sunday 29th November 2020

"MORE THAN"

Read through this outline and join with everyone else at 11 am

HYMN MP 746 (to read or sing)

What a Friend we have in Jesus
All our sins and griefs to bear.
What a privilege to carry
Everything to God in prayer.
O what peace we often forfeit.
O what needless pain we bear.
All because we do not carry
Everything to God in prayer

Have we trials and temptations ?
Is there trouble anywhere ?
We should never be discouraged
Take it to the Lord in prayer
Can we find a friend so faithful
Who will all our sorrows share ?.
Jesus knows our every weakness -
Take it to the Lord in prayer.

Are we weak and heavy laden
Cumbered with a load of care ?
Precious Saviour, still our refuge !
Take it to the Lord in prayer !
Do thy friends despise, forsake thee ?
Take it to the Lord in prayer !
In His arms He'll take and shield thee,
Thou wilt find a solace there.

(It would be good if you said this prayer out aloud)

O God this morning we worship You because we appreciate just how great and glorious You are.

It is tough, everything is going crazy at the moment so we need Your help, Your strength, Your favour, Your blessing.

As we sit here remind us of Your love

Help us to feel Your presence In Jesus' Name

AMEN

You may like to say the Lord's prayer also.

BIBLE VERSE FOR THE WEEK

ROMANS 8:37

"No, in all these things we are more than conquerors *through Him that love us*

MORE THAN

God wants to be included in all our plans, consulted in all our decisions, honoured in every area of our life. Sometimes we nurture the idea it is in church matters or the spiritual side of our lives. There is a timely reminder in Proverbs 3:6 " *In all your ways acknowledge Him and He shall direct your paths*" So emphatic, leaving no room for argument or misunderstanding. "All your ways" God wants to bless us no matter the situation we are facing, the experiences we are going through or the confusion that swirls around during moments like this lockdown time.

Over the years I have discovered that you cannot control what happens **to** you but with God's help you can control what happens **in** you. Do you remember the advice Paul gave to the Philippians ? " *Do not be anxious about anything (4:6) rejoice in the Lord always (4:4)* Words written from a prison. Paul was in the prison but the prison was **not in** him ! He had a peace that was not subject to the place where he was or to what things people were doing around him. We can know the same.

When I think back to boyhood time I grew up with stories like Robin Hood, Roy Rogers, Arthur and the knights of the round table, George and slaying the dragon. It was another world. I have never read J.K.Rowling and her many stories of "ye oldee fantasy world" but I have read Eugene Peterson. In fact I am indebted to him almost daily for "The Message". Peterson asks a question in one of his other writings "Have you ever fought a dragon ?" Instinctively the response is "Of course not" but Peterson disagrees with us. Quote "Dragons are the projections of our fears, horrible constructions

of all that might hurt us" Like what we ask? He mentions - life threatening illness, the sudden job loss, the failed marriage, the estranged family member, the frailties of life. We are inadequate to fight these things on our own. Add to the list all that the pandemic has done. We need a champion. Not the fairy tale champion like one of Arthur's knights or King George. In all our battles we have an almighty, powerful, invincible Champion - our Saviour the Lord Jesus Christ. All the destructive forces of this broken world of ours are no match for Him. Listen to this " *But thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ " 1 Corinthians 15:57* That is why I turn your thoughts to our being "more than conquerors"

What dragons are you fighting just now?

How will we be more than conquerors ? How will we do it ?

1 By the prayers we pray

"But in everything by prayer .. let your requests be made known to God (Phil 4:6)

Note the word "everything" Listen to the song again "what a privilege to carry everything to God in prayer". This is the challenge in the struggle, in the fight, in the crisis and conflict. Pray. Pray about everything, the small and the great. The further admonition of Scripture is " *pray without ceasing*" (1 Thess.5:17)

"Lord, help me to keep trusting you no matter what I am experiencing. Help me manage this pain. Help me when I feel so alone and vulnerable. Help me to do the right thing. Help me because I know you are my Champion.

Over simplistic, too personal praying like that - go and read the Psalms. It is " *everything ... without ceasing*". More than enough to see us through.

2. Because of the promises we claim.

For all the promises of God are yea and amen in Him (2 Corinth1:20)

My Bible is marked with dates alongside promises I have claimed Oftentimes we falter when it comes to reading, remembering and relying on the promises of God - we settle for doing things in our own strength. The challenge of 1 Kings 8:56 should dominate our approach "There has not failed one word of all His good promise" It may sound a simple Sunday School chorus but "Every promise in the Book is mine. Every chapter, every verse every line. All are blessings of His love Divine. Every promise in the Book is mine" And so they are. It is our task to pursue and claim them for ourselves.