



Hope

In ancient times, people feared what they did not understand. Today, we tend to believe in the power of science to explain the unexplained and if it can't, we stake our faith that it will do in the near future. Ancient peoples particularly feared what hid or lurked in the gaps between solid realities, but, are we so much advanced from our ancestors? Do we really protect ourselves from the between with our reason? How many of us really close gaps in curtains or cupboard doors because it looks tidy? Or is that just what we tell ourselves?

Presently, we are caught in between times. When Covid 19 hit the front pages in this country, we found ourselves in an era of 'emergency response', there were strict rules and the majority believed and trusted in them. Ahead of us, is an 'emerging normal', some talk of 'getting back to normal', others feel there will be a 'new normal', but we are not there yet. We live in the unknown, our scientists and governments have not been able to offer us the solid reasoning, we have so long used to protect ourselves from fear. This is uncharted territory. This fear is on such a great scale; not just affecting our church, our community or even our country, but the world and there seems to be such uncertainty as to the duration of this threat.

How does this affect our church community? Anxiety rises, motivation declines and old weaknesses and conflicts reemerge. It all sounds so dismal, but perhaps this is a time to reevaluate; to ask what it is that we hold as the certainty in our lives; the solid reality in a time where everything feels so insecure. As Christians, we have certainty – Jesus' promise that he will never leave us. He sent the Holy Spirit to dwell with us at all times and we must remember that he stands with us, in body, in the hands, hearts and minds of those who love him.

So, when anxiety rises, when we cannot see a way forward, when all feels so impossible, look to God. Look to the hands and feet, the scars visible and invisible in the body of Christ besides us and know that he stands amongst us. We may not be able physically hold one another when fear is so close, but we can strengthen and encourage one another.

Allow yourself to be held in the arms of the Spirit. God promises never to leave us. Therefore, if you cannot look forward with confidence, look up with certainty, but don't just take my word for it.

If you are looking for the solid proof that offers great hope and protection from these in between times, look to the scriptures. Overleaf are a few to start you off, but let me know others that give you strength.

[Deuteronomy 31:8](#)

It is the Lord who goes before you. He will be with you; he will not leave you or forsake you. Do not fear or be dismayed."

[Deuteronomy 31:6](#)

Be strong and courageous. Do not fear or be in dread of them, for it is the Lord your God who goes with you. He will not leave you or forsake you."

[Joshua 1:5](#)

No man shall be able to stand before you all the days of your life. Just as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will not leave you or forsake you.

[Hebrews 13:5-6](#)

Keep your life free from love of money, and be content with what you have, for he has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you." So we can confidently say, "The Lord is my helper; I will not fear; what can man do to me?"

[Joshua 1:9](#)

Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go."

[Isaiah 41:10](#)

Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.

[Deuteronomy 4:31](#)

For the Lord your God is a merciful God. He will not leave you or destroy you or forget the covenant with your fathers that he swore to them.

[Matthew 28:20](#)

...And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

[Psalm 118:6](#)

The Lord is on my side; I will not fear. What can man do to me?

[Hebrews 4:16](#)

Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

[Romans 8:28](#)

And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.

[Philippians 4:6-7](#)

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

[2 Timothy 1:7](#)

For God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control.

[Isaiah 55:7](#)

Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return to the Lord, that he may have compassion on him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.

[Isaiah 41:17](#)

When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue is parched with thirst, I the Lord will answer them; I the God of Israel will not forsake them.

[Psalm 27:10](#)

For my father and my mother have forsaken me, but the Lord will take me in.