

EVERYTHING HAS CHANGED

It seems that everything has changed. We are living in a very different world than we were only a few weeks ago. Our lifestyle has changed, our patterns of behaviour have changed. Perhaps our relationships have changed. For many of us, if not most of us, our work has changed. Some of us, sadly, have lost our work. Some have no work to do. Some are working harder than they have ever worked before.

Some of those things that have changed will go back to normal in time. I, for example, like to go to the gym and go swimming and, at some point in the future, I will be able to do those things again. Some things, though, will stay changed. Those who have lost loved ones will not get them back. Those who have lost jobs, will not get them back. Some relationships that suffer may not be made good again.

Right now, the impact of this corona virus is that everything has changed.

There have been other events throughout history that have changed everything. But, there is one event that stands alone that changed everything for eternity. One writer describes it this way.

History has only one main event.

Mankind's timeline is dotted with important moments:

The first spark from the first flint; the rolling of the first wheel; the treating of the first wound. Who dares to minimise these events?

But who dares compare them with the cross? History has only one main event. Scripture has only one main event. Others matter, but only one is essential.

- *The story of Jericho might stir you but falling walls can't redeem you.*
- *Moses will give you direction in the wilderness, but no solution for your sin.*
- *David's defeat of Goliath may reduce your timidity, but only the cross prepares you for eternity.*

Scripture has only one main event. Even in the life of Jesus there is only one main event. For if there is no cross of Christ, then there is no truth to Christ.

When it comes to your life the same is true. To remove the cross is to remove the hinge pin from the door of hope – the door of your hope.

- *For if there is no cross, then there is no sacrifice for sin*
- *If there is no sacrifice for sin, how will you face a sinless God. Will you cleanse your own sin?*
- *And if there is no cross of Christ, there is no resurrection of Christ.*
- *And if there is no resurrection, how will you live again? Will you push back your own grave?*

Forgiveness of sin, deliverance from death, these are the claims of the cross. Let there be no mistake. The cross is not an event in history. It is THE event in history.¹

Today we celebrate the event in history that changed everything. It is the event that tells us of the far bigger and far better story than the one we see in front of us. It is the event that tells us of the God who loves us beyond our imagining.

It is the event that teaches us that God loves us because he loves us because he loves us...

It is the event that reminds us that nothing can separate us from God's great and magnificent love. That's another way of saying that there is no place where God's love cannot reach us. It's another way of saying the God's love reaches us when we are at work in the hospital. It's another way of saying that God's love reaches us in our fear. It's another way of saying God's love reaches us in our tiredness. It's another way of saying God's love reaches us in our sorrow.

It may well be difficult for us to know and feel God's love in this time when everything has changed. There are lots of things that may make it difficult to know and feel God's love reaching to us, but the truth of history's most important event, the one that changed everything forever, is that nothing can separate you from God's love.

The life changing truth of the Easter story, the event in history that changed everything forever, is that you are greatly loved by God. He cannot love you

¹ Max Lucado.....

more than he does right now, and there is nothing you can do to make him love you less.

Knowing this truth, believing this truth, trusting this truth, changes everything. It brings an unquenchable joy, not despite these very challenging circumstances, but right in the middle of them. It brings a peace that the world simply cannot give. It brings hope, not a hope that everything will turn out ok, but an assurance that in everything we are held in God's bigger and better story.

We are living in a time when everything has changed and right now, we don't quite know where it's all going. The future is uncertain.

Easter changed everything, forever.

I pray that you would know the joy, peace and hope that Easter brings. I pray that you would know deep in your heart that, whatever happens, nothing can separate you from God's great and magnificent love.

I wish you a very happy Easter, because, quite simply, it is the life-changing event of history.

Prepared by Rev. Ian Phillips, live streamed from Crawley Baptist Church on Easter Sunday, 12th April 2020.