

Hello again, It's now Easter Saturday the day after Good Friday and the Day before Easter Sunday (Resurrection Sunday as I prefer to call it).

We've been locked down for a few weeks now and this is the 4<sup>th</sup> Reflection for Today - so what on earth is going on? The current UK death toll due to the Corona Virus (Covid 19) is just over 9.8 thousand, and more than 104 thousand worldwide. We still haven't reached the point where we can comfortably say that the infection rate is falling and no-one knows how this is going to pan out over the coming months or whether or not it will reoccur in Autumn/Winter. In the natural, there is every reason to freak out and panic and say things like – it's out of control, it's coming to get me, or maybe it's the end of the world.

Let's get things in perspective. UK road deaths are generally around 1.7 to 1.8K per annum. There are around 165K cancer deaths in the UK every year, that's around 450 every day (2015-2017). The UK death toll due to the normal bout of annual influenza is around 17K per year and deaths due to alcohol abuse is around 24K, illicit drug abuse around 3K, and death by misuse of prescription drugs is more than 4K per year. Suicide is at a 16 year high at around 6.5K per annum. Most of these statistics are rising year in year, and clearly many people are sad, depressed, desperate, and arrive at a point where they become hopeless and believe that the only way to escape their misery and despair is to choose death. The only relief they can find in this world leads them to an early grave.

But death will come to us all sooner or later unless we are amongst those who meet The Lord Jesus in the air – so does it really matter how we die?

Some 75 million people died in World War II, including about 20 million military personnel and 40 million civilians, many of who died because of deliberate genocide, massacres, mass-bombings, disease, and starvation.

Notably, 6-Million Jews were targeted by Adolph Hitler and selected to die prematurely. Does that put Covid 19 into perspective?

There is something that **does** make an incalculable amount of difference to us though. Although there were 6-million Jews put to death during the last world war – most of them by inhuman means. There wasn't one of those deaths that made one jot of a difference to your eternal future....and yet...2000 years ago, a similar looking Jew from the tribe of Judah, an innocent young man of 33 years of age with no wife or children, no army, no money, no house, gold or valuables voluntarily allowed the Romans to execute him at the demands of his own people. People who decided that their way was far more important than God's way, who demanded to stay in charge and dictate what others should do, and how much they should obey and give to their organisation.

As far as I know, it matters very little how you die and the circumstances of your death are better left in God's hands – I thank God that He does not let us know the day nor the hour of our death any more than we know the day or the hour of the rapture of the church. But, how and when Jesus lived and died is extremely important to everyone. Because if it had been different – it wouldn't have fulfilled scripture and it wouldn't have been of God.

Here are 2 disciples unwittingly speaking to Jesus about Jesus soon after his resurrection:

**Luke 24:20-27** *The chief priests and our rulers handed him over to be sentenced to death, and they crucified him; but we had hoped that he was the one who was going to redeem Israel. And what is more, it is the third day since all this took place. In addition, some of our women amazed us. They went to the tomb early this morning but didn't find his body. They came and told us that they had seen a vision of angels, who said he was alive. Then some of our companions went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but him they did not see." He said to them, "How foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! **Did not the Christ have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?"** And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.*

It is extremely unlikely that as a believing Christian, you will avoid pain and suffering in this world. It is certain that you will encounter troubles of many kinds. Jesus made this clear to us before he left us:

**John 16:28-33** *I came from the Father and entered the world; now I am leaving the world and going back to the Father." Then Jesus' disciples said, "Now you are speaking clearly and without figures of speech. Now we can see that you know all things and that you do not even need to have anyone ask you questions. This makes us believe that you came from God." "You believe at last!" Jesus answered. "But a time is coming, and has come, when you will be scattered, each to his own home. You will leave me all alone. Yet I am not alone, for my Father is with me. **"I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."***

I've said it before, and I keep hearing it from other Christians – there is a supernatural peace during this pandemic for those that believe. You see God is shaking everything that can be shaken. He's closed the pubs and the clubs, many shops, schools, beaches, cinemas, restaurants, cafes, meeting places, businesses etc. He's even closed our church buildings!

But, what difference does it make to you? For me, like others, I still enjoy walking the dog, being at home with my family, and the radio. I can still enjoy my garden, the spring flowers, the telephone, social media (most of the time!) reading and praying.

There are many opportunities to do good at times like this; our faith is stretched – which is not a bad thing. We are forced to recalculate, to reassess our lifestyles and what we do with our time and money. What we think about, and what we thought was important to us.

One thing is for sure – because Jesus rose from the dead and sent his Holy Spirit - we have Him with us for all time – Pandemic or not. His peace He left with us and it doesn't depend on *anyone* else or *anything* else. **The Death and Resurrection of Jesus – it makes all the difference in the world!**

Until we meet again: Happy Resurrection Day, Choose Life, Trust Jesus, God Bless,

Rob