

I hope you were able to use the marvellous modern technology to join us at the Prayer Meeting last Wednesday, and now this first ever ‘Virtual’ CBC Sunday Morning Service since the ‘Lock-Down’ started towards the end of March.

It seems that the harder things become – the harder some people try to stay in communication with each other – most churches have put in place some kind of social-media facility in order to reach the members of their church and stay in-touch.

So what DO we have now? From the humble telephone that was invented in 1876 by Scottish-born Alexander Graham Bell (that’s 144 years ago) we can now communicate around the globe and millions of miles into space.

Today, we can both transmit and receive both audio and video signals with remarkable speed and quality. But does that make us BETTER communicators?

You’d think so wouldn’t you – but how many of us suffer loneliness and feelings of isolation even though we are surrounded by no end of gadgets and communication devices. We strive to get a fantastic broadband speed – but then what?

I think we’re all guilty of it – we think about people, wonder how they’re getting on – even pray for them and make mental notes about calling them – and then we forget or something distracts us or gets in the way.

Even during this lock-down we’re experiencing – how many people have you thought about calling compared to how many you actually contacted?

It’s really quick and easy to send out an email or text, put a message on WhatsApp or your Facebook page or maybe even Skype or Zoom someone – but is that the same as having a chat? Communication is far more involved than just words on paper.

We all know how dangerous texting is – it’s really easy to put your foot in your mouth so-to-speak! You can almost **guarantee** that if there **IS** a wrong way of understanding something that you’ve written – that someone you’ve just contacted by writing a brief note or text - will be the one who misunderstands! – it’s all too easy to just press send before you’ve read and checked what you’ve written – (especially with auto-spell-checkers) and once it’s gone – it’s gone! (How often have you had to correct something after you’ve sent it?!)

How many of us feel that **GOD** doesn’t speak to us often enough? Clearly enough? LOUD enough, friendly enough, that maybe **HE** doesn’t encourage us enough or help us enough?

A parable of Jesus reads:

**Matthew 25:39-40** *When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?’ ‘The King will reply, I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.’*

This is Jesus encouraging us to help our brothers and sisters – and it’s not just our own human family he’s talking about it’s the fellowship of believers. But now that **social distancing** as they call it, restricts us – HOW are we going to carry out God’s desire? Well, Jesus also tells us:

**Luke 6:30-31** *‘Give to everyone who asks you, and if anyone takes what belongs to you, do not demand it back. **Do to others, as you would have them do to you.**’*

The church has been asked for help recently – and in accordance with this God-given directive we have helped. BUT, there is also a responsibility to ASK. It is better to ask, than jump to conclusions or criticize someone or something without knowing all the facts.

When you pray to God - you communicate right? You don’t need any kind of ‘device’ other than the desire and determination to get down and do-it. You don’t even need to speak out the words – but I believe it really helps to hear yourself speaking to God and listen to what YOU’RE saying, before listening out for how HE answers you!

It’s the same with people – THINKING about making contact it doesn’t actually make any difference does it?! There’s a saying that goes: *“The road to Hell is paved with good intentions”* Now, I’m not saying you could lose your salvation over this – but you could surely miss out on a blessing and making someone feel appreciated. Greeting Cards are nice – but real words and actions are better!

My advice to MYSELF is this – don’t expect people to ring you up and ask how you are and generally chat and be friendly – IF – you can’t be bothered to do the same thing for others! That’s my advice to myself – BUT as you’ve heard elsewhere – IF THE CAP FITS – WEAR IT!

Have you ever wondered why you don’t hear from God very often? Could it have anything to do with your communication – to do with how often you call **HIM** for a chat?

**Jeremiah 33:2** *“This is what the LORD says, he who made the earth, the LORD who formed it and established it — the LORD is his name: **‘Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know.’**”*

With all the best technology in the world – we can still be lousy communicators! So let’s use this special time of isolation – to meditate on what God hopes we will do with it, as I’m quite sure that HE is amongst many people who are just hoping to get a call!

**Romans 12:9-13** *Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honour one another above yourselves. Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervour, serving the Lord. Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. Share with God’s people who are in need. Practise hospitality.*

I think we can fulfil most of what is in that scripture – and in the meantime perhaps we can consider how we can practise hospitality when things return to normality – perhaps if we’ve been communicating better, we’ll want to come back together with a greater desire to be together, to serve each other, and The Lord.

Until we meet again: Keep Safe, Trust Jesus, and Communicate! God Bless,

Rob