

## LOCKDOWN DAY 62 – 27 MAY 2020

Molweni family of False Bay and our many friends,

Scripture: John 17:11b-19    Hymn: *Great is Thy faithfulness*

Firstly, thank you so much for responding to our **call to prayer** yesterday and meditating on Psalm 46. God is indeed our refuge and strength. Prayers are being answered. 53% of people who were infected with the Corona Virus have recovered. We continue to soak in prayer those who choose to serve our country, no matter the risk of this pandemic. The courage of those who have passed away, abides in our hearts. We pray for their loved ones, that they may have strength to move through their heartache.

Yes, our State President announced last night that we will be allowed to go back to congregational worship in level 3. It will mean staggering services as numbers will be limited to fifty. There are weighty responsibilities upon us and practical things we must put in place. Many of our under-resourced communities have not been able to join through digital technology and have been left out of any form of worship.

Let us turn to today's Scripture reading. As always, the Scriptures provide the assurance that God is not absent even during these most turbulent and troubled times. In the Gospel, we have the middle section of Jesus' prayer during the last discourse. We are meant to overhear this intimate conversation between Jesus and the Father so that we can be encouraged by the legacy bequeathed to us. Jesus addresses God as "Father," the one who, in a patriarchal culture, is responsible for protecting the whole household. Jesus has **embodied** this **protective care of** his disciples. My prayer is that our modern day 'fathers' will enwrap their children in their arms and fend off all threats to their children. Likewise, our mothers enfold their children, shielding them from all harm.

Jesus has been consecrated for mission, so he prays for the consecration of his followers. "Consecrated" means to be **anointed** and set apart for mission. This reality does not separate us from the realities of ordinary people, but in truth it **immerses us into the heart** of all the **struggles** of the Covid-19 pandemic. In the passage we hear Jesus saying that he **guarded** his disciples, yet one of them, who was allotted to share his ministry, ended up **guiding** those who arrested him. We will also face hostility in our ministry but these are birth pangs that give way to complete joy in new life.

Note what Jesus prays for us:

**Protection** (17:11,15): We will face opposition, just as Jesus has done. We are entrusted to the **protection** of God our Parent.

**Unity** (17:11): The unity of present and future leaders of the church is to reflect the unity between Jesus and his Father. I thank God for guarding and guiding us in False Bay Diocese, where we have a keen sense of unity. Please let us maintain this.

**Joy** (17:13): Jesus wants us to know, not just a **half measure** but the **full measure** of **divine joy** within us. As Christian witnesses, we need that. Times are tough but this joy defies external circumstances.

**Sanctification** (17: 17-19): This means being holy and yet set apart for service. It has aspects of moral purity, truthfulness and being equipped for our calling.

I ask you to **reach out** today to any of our church leaders, lay or ordained.

**We pray** for leaders in the church, using John 17:11-19 to guide us. **Pray**, like the first disciples, waiting for the Spirit to come in power as we celebrate Pentecost on Sunday. **Pray** that the Spirit continues to raise up leaders for the church in new patterns for changing times. **There is a nationwide call to prayer on Sunday.**

I am, Because we Are, Because God is ... Opening hearts to heal God's world. *Choose to keep a positive attitude.*