

2021-01-10 ... Video/Phone Reflection Talk ... Revd Canon Judy Hunt
Mark 1: 4 – 11

‘What really matters?’

Hello and welcome to this message for the weekend of the 9th and 10th January ...

We’re into another New Year and another national lockdown – and for Fauls, Tilstock, Whitchurch – another period without Church services – although our church building remain open.

So a question for each of us: ***What really matters?***

Coronavirus has perhaps helped us to focus on our answers to that question: ***What really matters?*** And when Covid-19 illness or restrictions have got in the way of ***what really matters*** for us – we’ve tried to find ways to achieve our goals differently or to lessen the detrimental effect:

- Restaurants doing takeaways
- Taxis doing deliveries
- On-line learning
- Manufacturing companies changing to making PPE
- Praying together on Zoom or on the phone
- Parents recording their children opening presents so that grandparents can still watch
- Get-togethers of friends or families on Zoom or whatever

We’ve changed our behaviour, we’ve developed our skill sets so that ***what really matters*** doesn’t disappear.

In the Church’s pattern of Bible readings this year, we’re concentrating on the Gospel of Mark – this could be dubbed the “***What really matters Gospel***”

It’s the shortest, it doesn’t ‘hang about’, it’s fast paced ... and so we can conclude that Mark has included ***what really matters***.

The passage for this weekend is from the opening chapter – **chapter 1 v 4-11** and it includes John the Baptist saying to crowds of people that – although he (John) is baptising them with water – ***Jesus will baptise us with the Holy Spirit***.

This is ***what really matters*** – Jesus is the one who gives us the Holy Spirit ... and it matters greatly to us now. In this ongoing pandemic – we need the fruits of the Spirit more than ever – love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, gentleness, generosity and self-control. We need the gifts of the Spirit more than ever – faith, wisdom, self-giving service.

How, before this pandemic, did you connect with Jesus through the Holy Spirit?

What might you need to change to connect with Jesus through the Holy Spirit during this lockdown?

What really matters is that you do connect – not the how ...

So just as businesses have changed to still be active ...

Just as parents have changed the ways in which grandparents can connect with their grand- **PTO**

children ...There may be ways in which you change the ways in which you stay receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit from Jesus.

If it's important enough for Mark to include in his Gospel – it's important enough for us to take on board!

Staying in touch with the presence, gifts, fruits of the Spirit – can't at the moment be through receiving Communion, through singing together in worship, through sitting together in a fellowship or study group ...

But it can still happen!

- Go for an intentional prayer walk – what does God want to give you through what you see, hear, taste, feel, smell ...
- Arrange to ring a friend and talk about what each of you most needs from the Holy Spirit – and pray together ...
- Adopt a new way of Bible meditation or prayer – contact me, Sue, Sam or Jane if you need some help with this.

What really matters is to continually receive from Jesus.

One person, who thought that being filled with the Spirit was a one-off experience, said to a friend: ***“Well, you shouldn't need to pray like that anymore.”***

To which the friend replied: ***“Oh yes, I know that I've received the gift of the Holy Spirit – but I also know that I leak!”***

A prayer for us all to conclude this message:

Lord Jesus, thank you that you came to baptise us with your Holy Spirit. In these difficult times, when we can't always do what has previously kept us in touch with you, renew and strengthen us to find new ways, new patterns to live with you in our daily lives. Amen.