

# Kington Baptist Church

## MESSAGE BOARD – 66

Sometimes our confidence in the faithfulness of God may be tested, and tested hard. This has been true in every age – I could give almost endless examples: Noah, Abraham, Moses, Joshua, Naomi, Ruth, Samuel, David, Job, Jeremiah – the list is almost endless. Of course Peter, Paul, Stephen – and supremely the Lord Jesus, in the desert, in the Garden of Gethsemane, at his trial and facing the overwhelming darkness of his death.

I'm sceptical when governments pass down statistics but the figures given to us this week are alarming and we would be foolish not to pay the most serious attention to the implications for each of us personally of such disturbing numbers: 100,000,000 infections of the virus world-wide and 100,000 virus related deaths in our own country. Even as I write down those figures I'm convicted of the ease with which we can talk about such a thing in an almost detached and theoretical way! But each one who has died – whether from the virus or for any other reason – is an immortal human being. Each must, as you and I must, face the unavoidable judgment of Almighty God. It distresses me that this most crucial fact is today almost totally ignored.

Facing the unavoidable reality of our mortality it's essential that we must be more sure than ever that we have an anchor for the soul, steadfast and sure. I'd be failing you if I didn't press this point. Believe me, if we were able to meet for worship this would, at this time, be a major theme of our services.

Do *you* have, are you *sure* you have, this anchor of confidence in the faithfulness, love and care of God in life and in death? The Christian can and should place *absolute* trust in the unchangeable care that God has promised. His promises are his covenant – the covenant-promise, sealed by an oath in his own name – because there is nothing greater that he could pledge by – to save those who 'call upon the name' of Jesus, all who trust themselves to Jesus. We have the assurance that our lives, when placed in the safe-keeping of the love of Christ, will be exposed only to what '*the Lord wills*' – nothing else can come our way! And for those who trust in him his *will* for us is only love, mercy and grace!

Based on this same solid hope and confidence, John Wesley used to say, 'Our people die well!' With this very same foundation, Simeon of old was able to say, '*Lord, now your servant may depart in peace*'. What gave him such peace in the face of death? '*My eyes have seen your salvation!*' He simply looked into the face of Jesus – and peace, perfect peace, filled his heart – '*Peace, perfect peace; death shadowing us and ours? Jesus has vanquished death and all its powers!*'

As we take the essential measures to protect ourselves and others, **one thing alone is absolutely necessary**. For the young man who questioned Jesus, it was to give up trusting in his wealth. If he did that it would be proof that now he **put all his confidence in Christ alone**. For you and for me it will be different – but the same: to abandon all hope and trust in anything else, and to place our trust fully and only in Jesus.

*Someone asked Jesus, 'What must I do to find eternal life?' Jesus said, 'Come, follow me.' ... Jesus looked intently at his disciples and said, 'Humanly speaking, it is impossible. But not with God. With God all things are possible.'* (Mark 10.17-27)

For us the 'one thing necessary' is the same: to put all our confidence in Jesus alone – in life and in death. As you do that you will have a safe stronghold, come what may! My prayer is that *you will know all joy and peace in believing*.

*When I tread the verge of Jordan,  
Bid my anxious fears subside;  
Death of death and hell's destruction,  
Land me safe on Canaan's side.  
Songs of praises, songs of praises,  
I will ever give to thee!*