

Dear Friends,

Over the past week or so, I have undertaken a variety of different journeys. On two occasions, I needed to travel to Hoddesdon for particular meetings. Having established it would be about 1.5 hours to where I was needing to be, I allowed myself ample time. On the first occasion, it took 3 hours 20 minutes and on the second occasion 1.5 hours. Quite a difference in so many ways.

The same journey felt very different each time. The first had left me very sorry for others who had had a worse day than me, otherwise the motorway wouldn't have been closed in the first place. At the same time, there was some frustration that I couldn't make progress and be where I needed to be. The second journey saw me arrive with nearly an hour to spare and feeling much more at peace as a consequence.

As we enter March, Lent begins during the first week. Lent is a period in the church where we journey together in our discipleship as we then approach Holy Week and Easter which, this year, fall in April. Sometimes our discipleship journeys are easier than others, but we can rest assured knowing that Jesus is with us through the Holy Spirit in whatever situation we find ourselves in.

Our journey of faith is ongoing and sometimes we may find that we see this from different perspectives. There are times where it is difficult and other times where things seem to be a bit easier. Wherever we are in ourselves and with God, we know that Jesus is walking alongside us. In Philippians 3, Paul writes about the need to 'press on towards the goal for the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus.' We know that God's grace is there for all who turn to Jesus and that this is assured. We can rest easy in that. At the same time, we will want to seek to become more like Christ, and to share the message of salvation with others so they can come to know Jesus for themselves. There are times where this is easier than at others.

As we enter Lent, and a period of preparation ahead of Holy Week and Easter, let's use it as a time and season for learning more about how God is working in our life and in the life of the communities in which we live. We do this by drawing close to God and allowing Jesus to work in us, to help to shape our character, and to recognise how the Holy Spirit is working. If we are feeling that we are in a difficult season, let's stop to notice all that is going on around us. If we are in a time of feeling more at peace, then let's not be afraid to share this with others. As we come alongside others, they may also be encouraged in their own journey of discipleship.

As we journey through life, may we continue to recognise the peace and presence of Jesus in all we do.

God bless,
Chris