

Friday 7th August George Powell

Welcome to this beautiful day, I think we'll need to get the sun cream and hats out as it's going to be a very hot day. This morning I'm sat here and about to go off and see my family in Suffolk, which will be great and I've had this weird moment – we've been praying over a situation over the past few months and some of you have been helping and praying with us – I was caught by surprise this morning and the surprise was I was able to see someone today and it was unexpected. One of those moments when you think, oh crumbs what do I do now, how wonderful that I'm able to see and it was just a wonderful moment.

To be honest I'm sitting here with the wind out of my sails, wondering what I should be saying this morning and it drew my attention to the fact that God is so good in situations that we face on our journey with Him. Sometimes we don't even realise that in the detail of Him working out the threads of our life that He is in the midst of that. We might think that there's no way through, but suddenly God opens up a door and it's through nothing that I've done myself, through no hard work or fervour on my side, but suddenly God just being the Father that He is, the loving God that He is, had decided I want a blessing for My son this morning. And I've had a real blessing, it was a wow, not what I'd expected. And it drew me to that verse that many of us know in Romans where it says, 'in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who ^[1] have been called according to his purpose.' [8:28] It's kind of like how much that God loves me that even in my processes of working through life and trying to understand what's going on, that God is for me and loves me and situations would be designed around in my life which God will take me on this journey where suddenly it's a showing of His love for me – it's just a complete surprise, I didn't expect that, I didn't expect You Lord to come and be with me in that way.

But then I was thinking about it and He is a good Father, a good God, a God who loves me for who I am. And actually part of my relationship with Him, when I gave my life to Him, when Jesus died on the Cross for me and I gave my life over to Him, it wasn't to be just a person who's got a bunch of religious views and a bunch of rules I have to follow. It was about having this deep relationship of learning to understand who God is and God getting to know me for who I am. And what God wants to be is journeying with me in the midst of my ups and downs, whatever I'm going through, whatever I'm facing, He wants to be in the midst of that. He wants to be right in the middle of everything I'm doing. And I lose sight of that quite often, I try and take things on myself, I try and take responsibility for things, I try and do them on my own – my thinking, my mindset is trying to do it on my own. but God is saying 'no, come back to Me, come back to Me, I want to journey this with you, I want to be in the midst of what you're going through, in the good times and the bad times'.

Our prayer life gets really, really good doesn't it when we're going through tough times. We're suddenly praying, oh Lord this situation, I don't know how to deal with it, I don't know how to deal with that, and our prayer life suddenly takes a step up when we're going through a tough time. I do often wonder what God must be feeling up there and thinking that's great I love to walk with you in the midst of that and I am with you in the midst of that, standing with you through all the trials and tribulations that you're going through, but also I want to join with you when there's good things going on. I want to join with you when the joy of the Lord can be felt, I just want to be with you in all your life, whatever you're facing, the good and the bad.

I was looking at my kids, and I want to celebrate with my kids when things are going well. I want to celebrate with them and say well done, well done. I love it. I'm going to embarrass her now, my daughter's just finished her degree and got a 2.1 in Biology, which is pretty amazing, and I love it, I want to celebrate with joy, I want to be part of that. She did all the work and stayed up to silly o'clock doing all the assignments and everything else, but when it comes to that moment of

celebrating, I want to celebrate what she's done, to be a part of it. It's great to share that joy together, to share that experience together. So often, when we're running through life in our busyness we forget that God wants to be with us in the midst of those things.

If you look back to the disciples, they got to know what it was to live with Jesus, you read through the New Testament and it was all about being with them through the ups and the downs. I wonder if today part of this lockdown is to remind ourselves of how, even in the midst of everything that we're going through, God is wanting to walk with us in this journey because everything works together for the good of those who love Him. What's the qualification for that? I think, if I read it rightly, it's if I love Him, everything works together for good for those who love Him.

He's created you for a purpose, that purpose to be outworked in you this morning, and today, and whatever you're facing right now, God is good and He wants to love you for who you are and He wants to walk with you in the midst of that. And this morning, sorry if I'm a bit whirly, whirly this morning because as I say it's a bit of an interesting morning to be honest, but I just see God's face smiling on me, I see His wonderful joy and that starts to have an effect on the people around us, that joy, that overriding peace that's in our hearts, 'rejoice in all things and the peace that transcends all understanding', that's all understanding, there is nothing that I can understand any more, but there's a peace can come over all of that and it just blows your mind and that's how God wants us to live our lives. Yes there will be ups and downs, but lets get back to being close to Him, let's get back to being in relationship. It's a two-way thing.

Many of you have got friendships, wives or husbands, and it's a bit odd isn't it if your friend, or your spouse, every time you spoke to them would not respond, it would be a bit odd, that would not make sense. It's a two way thing. It's a bit of an obvious statement to make but it's a two way thing and it's the same with God. He wants to be with us. Jesus came to give us life and life abundantly. It's kind of like part of our journey, in salvation, in working out our salvation daily, is understanding the truth that Jesus died for us, yes, but the truth about the relationship that God wants with us.

Go back to the beginning, Adam and Eve right at the beginning, God walked with them in the cool of the day, it was kind of like He wanted to talk to them about how are the animals doing today, how's the farm doing, how's the whatever, how's it doing today, how are things going? I always look back at that and think wow, that must have been an amazing part of their journey together, just communing with God in all things and the life that must have abounded in their spirits and they must have come alive in who they were created to be. Today the promise is that we can be that, we can, through what Jesus did on the cross, through salvation, we can come back to that unity with God. We can come back to knowing who we are in Him, we can come back to knowing the purposes He has for us through our close relationship with Him, not simply because we exist just to do.

He wants to be my friend at the end of the day, He wants to be my friend and He wants to be with me in all that I go through. As I said he wants to share in those things and this morning I want us to be encouraged that God is on your case and mine, whatever you're facing, whatever you're looking at. There might well be some hard things you're facing, but start to rejoice in the relationship, start to rejoice in who you are in Him. Start to rejoice that there's a God, there's a Father, there's a Son and there's a Holy Spirit who are all praying for you, they are interceding on your behalf.

If you go back to that verse in Romans, just before it says in verse 26 'in the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express. He who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to God's will'. It's according to God's will, He's backing us up; He's behind the scenes. The Holy Spirit is praying for you right now

with what you're facing. He is interceding for you right now as saints. How amazing is it, it isn't just about being nice Christians, this is about a full relationship with Him. A full relationship with Him, which is overwhelming when you start to think about it, when you start to understand the truth of what that means. That God, who created the heavens and the earth is interested in George! Wow! That just blows my mind. Today I want to encourage us, that in the midst of everything you're going through, even in the midst of this weird season we're in, that God is with us, He's interested in our journey together and he wants to be part of that journey with us through the lows and the highs.

Going back to Psalm 91, as we all know, there's refuge in Him. He who dwells in the shadow of the most high will rest in the shadow of the almighty. How amazing is it that you can find rest in the middle of that? That's how intimate God wants to be with you this morning, that's how close He wants to be with you today. That's how much He loves you this morning, he wants to be a part of every area of your life.

It's a bit sad when you look at what's just happened in Beirut, sometimes we don't understand these things but it's very sad, but even in the midst of that God is there to touch and to reach people and we should be praying for them. God's heart is for those people and suddenly, as we get close to God, we'll be for those people, we'll be praying for them, we'll be seeking His face and talking to God about that situation and what's happened and asking for the Lord to be with those people. I'm not trying to teach my grandmother to suck eggs here, but this is the reality of who Jesus is, who God is and who He wants to be for you and for me. He wants to walk with us daily, daily, daily, daily in everything we face.

So this morning I've had this great experience and it's simply wonderful to have that interaction and I just felt God smiling and saying "I'm with you Son. I know what you've been praying for, I know what you've been going through. But in the midst of it I have a purpose that I'm outworking in you, but I want to share that with you, I want to share that life with you, I want to be close to you, I want to be in all those moments with you, because we are together. I love you for who you are and I'm always going to be here for you". Imagine that. Imagine the peace and security I can have knowing that my Father in heaven is there for me in everything that I do. Jesus is interceding for me, the Holy Spirit is interceding for me, God is on my case and He loves me. That's quite a formidable bunch of people to have around you in your journey, isn't it?

So I hope that has encouraged you and I hope you have a great day and just remember, we know that God works for the good of those who love Him and have been called according to His purpose. Whatever you're facing today, you've been called to a purpose. Bless you all and have a great Friday. The devotionals will be back on Monday.