



I offer these few thoughts for the lockdown, and if you think they may be helpful to some please feel free to pass them on. Graham Shaw

Re-imagining the future - with God

Writing out of the wisdom of one of the Psalms Timothy Keller says, "Suffering is a school where students learn things about themselves, about God and about life that they would never have learned without it". This is surely true of our experience of Covid-19 and the lockdown. For some of us the suffering has been slight - no more than what the Apostle Paul calls "our light and momentary troubles" - for others it has been deep and painful. But for all of us surely it has been an opportunity to learn some important truths, otherwise hidden from our eyes, about ourselves, about God and about our relationship with God. And when eventually we start to come out of lockdown it is important that we do not put aside what the experience has taught us. Otherwise a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity will have

been missed and we might just return to the "normal" we knew before the epidemic struck, when God would surely have us create a new and far better "normal", closer to the kingdom into which Jesus invited the first disciples, and invites us. So let us seize the opportunity to imagine what might be, with God; in short let us re-imagine the future.

To help us do this I am going to suggest we put to ourselves three important questions which we can reflect on daily while we are constrained to keep our social distance from one another. Then when we are able to meet again freely, to pray together and share our different experiences - and what a joy that will be - we can reflect on the lessons God would have us learn and the changes he would have us make towards that re-imagined future. I suggest we each ask ourselves:

- 1. What new thing have I learned about God - about myself - and about my relationship with God?*
- 2. What has God shown me must be changed in the values and priorities of the nation, and what used to be taken as our normal way of life ?*
- 3. What new insights has God blessed me with about the changes needed for the Church to fulfil its calling?*

I invite you therefore to reflect on these questions, perhaps jotting down the thoughts that come to mind as you consider them prayerfully. Don't agonise over this and if nothing special comes to mind that's ok. But if you have a sense that God has revealed something he wants you to take on board then why not make a note of it. Then when we are able to meet again we shall be able to help one another to re-imagine the future into which he would lead us, and perhaps to start down that way together.