

### Reflection #3 - Hope

As I write this reflection the government are due to be meeting to determine whether there will be any easing of the current lockdown. We all recognise that any easing will be a long process of gradual change to manage any risks of further spikes in infection. And just the thought of small changes to our situation provide us a glimmer of hope for the future days and weeks to come as life slowly returns to normal(ish).

A glimmer of hope - The Collins dictionary defines hope as: *A feeling of desire for something and confidence in the possibility of its fulfilment.*

I have a hope, that The Millards will be able to move to the Rectory by the end of the May.  
I have a hope, that we will be able to meet in our church buildings before Christmas.  
I have a hope, that through the challenge of the lockdown, Jesus will bring more people to himself.

What are you hoping for at the moment?

I think that hope is important to Christians, and to our wider society. In the NIV version of the Bible the word hope appears 167 times - so there has to be some truth in this! With this in mind, I also think, that as Christians we are called to be *full of hope*. St Paul in Romans 15:13 says...

*'May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.'*

We are called to be full of hope, because we serve a God of hope, a God who gave us Jesus who is the greatest beacon of hope the world will ever know. If we seek to become more like Jesus - who we believe is God - then we should also become more hope-filled. Of course being hope-filled can sometimes feel challenging, not least during a lockdown! Yet, as Paul reminds us, we are not alone in this task. We are not left straining every sinew to try and produce a pseudo-smile of hope, but instead we are told that the Holy Spirit will empower us to overflow with hope - what an amazing promise! So if you are feeling lacking in hope at this time, then pray that the Holy Spirit will provide you with the Hope of God.

As we develop our hope, then we can bring that hope to those around us too - whether virtually, or from a safe distance! If we are called to witness to the Gospel, then we are to witness of the hope we have in Jesus. Paul reminds us of this in another verse about hope from Col. 1:27...

*'To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.'*

#### Tips for developing hope:

1. Prayer that the Holy Spirit will give you hope (see prayer below)
2. Read your Bible regularly to know the good things God has done through history.
3. Worship God. Remember those amazing things that God has done. Why not listen to some worship music - **Cornerstone** - <https://youtu.be/izrk-erhDdk>
4. Join with other Christians through Zoom, WhatsApp, Facebook and share your hope together, and let that lead you to sharing with those who don't know Jesus.

#### Hope Prayer

**H**oly Spirit,  
**O**pen our hearts each day, so that we can know your  
**P**resence in our lives,  
**E**nabling us to have confidence in you, the God of hope. **Amen.**