

Thought for the Day – 16th April 2020

Soft hearts

“I will sprinkle clean water on you and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols. I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws. Then you will live in the land I gave your ancestors, you will be my people and I will be your God.” Ezekiel 36:25-28

I wonder whether if like me, you frequently find yourself thinking about what God might be wanting to teach us during this time? To me it feels like everything is heightened. I am more aware of suffering and pain, I am more aware of those things in my character that are being refined, I more aware of those things in others that irritate, I am more aware of the things that I can no longer enjoy and more aware of the blessings that I do have. Somehow it all means so much more at the moment and even seemingly small things, like finding the last packet of pasta on the shelf when ours is all gone or receiving a smile from a stranger or an encouragement from a friend can transform my day.

The time we are in feels brutal, it is brutal – pretty much all the ‘idols’ that we might cling to are under threat or have been swept away, and it happened so quickly and without warning. We can no longer distract ourselves or satisfy ourselves with those things we would normally cling to and even our very best desires, like going to be with those dearest to us when they need us so much can’t be realised, unless of course, they reside in the same household. It feels so painful, and it is so painful, but I wonder if its heightening our dependence on God and softening our hearts towards Him and towards others? I also wonder, as I see families out walking together and have conversations with people who previously would have looked away, if God is softening the hearts of those around us too and drawing them to the One who truly satisfies?

As God’s people, I wonder if through this time our hearts and wills are becoming more aligned with God’s? You see my friends, I think God wants to put His Spirit in us in a new way so that He truly becomes first in our lives, He wants to move us, He wants to change us. He wants His people to shine for Him through these dark days and when we come through and out the other side of all this – He wants us to live differently, He doesn’t want us to go back to our old ways. He wants us to have hearts of flesh that break for a world that needs Him so desperately and He desires that our confidence in life, would be drawn from our confidence in Him.

“The Lord *is* concerned about fulfilling our desires but to do so; He must first pry our fingers off our lives and turn our hearts towards Him. Indeed, the reason we are alive, is not to fulfil our desires but to become *His* worshippers.” From ‘And I will be found by you’ by Francis Frangipane.

Amen.

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