



Newcastle City Temple Connected

Reimagining Church - Let's Worship Together

SUNDAY: 7th February 2021

Theme: BE A HERO

Key Text: Hebrews 11:1, 1 Corinthians 1:18-31

How's everyone doing? I don't know about you but having spoken so positively, just a three weeks ago, about the hope to be found in the first signs of springtime, this week has felt pretty miserable with the sun barely able to break through the clouds as the rain has lashed down—and if local weather reports are to be believed, then, for those of us living in the North East, at least, there is a good chance that by the time you read this newsletter you will be looking out on a blanket of snow, and feeling the chill of winter, as temperatures are set to plummet. But tomorrow will be a good day!...

"But tomorrow will be a good day" - Words of hope spoken by Captain Tom Moore in an interview with BBC Breakfast presenter Naga Munchetty back in April 2020; a quote which became the title of his autobiography.

This week the nation mourned the loss of Captain Sir Tom Moore who died on Tuesday 2nd February 2021, aged 100 after being admitted to hospital with Covid-19 following treatment for pneumonia. The Second World War veteran became one of the heroes of the pandemic by raising almost £33m for the NHS by walking 100 laps of his garden ahead of his 100th birthday. It wasn't only his fundraising actions that inspired the nation—but his carefully chosen words too;

Speaking about the coronavirus pandemic in April 2020 he said;

"We will get through it in the end but it might take time, but at the end of the day we shall all be OK again... the sun will shine on you again and the clouds will go away"

Through his words he sought to unite people in the efforts against this dreadful pandemic, which has now claimed the lives of 111,264* people; speaking in November 2020 he said;

**as of the 5th Feb 2021*

"I would like us all to stand shoulder to shoulder – metaphorically! Let's try not to get downhearted, we will get through this, whatever is thrown at us and together we can ensure that tomorrow will be a good day."

As I reflected on Captain Sir Tom's achievements, and what a remarkable man he was; a man of great resolve - A man who set his mind on doing something and didn't give in. A man who demonstrated tremendous courage and hope, and who became a wonderful example to us all - proving how extraordinary things can be accomplished by ordinary people - and how he has been hailed as a Hero, it helped me reflect on other 'unlikely heroes' too. Ordinary people who have influenced my life for good.

Before Covid if you'd asked people to call out names of Heroes—the list may well have included superhero characters like 'Batman, Spiderman, Superman, Deadpool, Harry Potter, James Bond, Indiana Jones, Wonder Woman, Han Solo, Luke Skywalker...' but my reckoning is that if we asked people today in the mist of the coronavirus - people are just as likely to list NHS and other Essential Workers; alongside the names of Joe Wicks, Marcus Rashford, Carol Vorderman, Piers Morgan, Patrick Hutchinson, Captain Sir Tom Moore, the Army, Our Queen & other Senior Royals, Scientists & technologists - people who have gone out of their way to help others and keep others safe, people who have campaigned for basic human rights, and held the government to account. And to this list you might well add the names of friends, neighbours, co workers — those who have gone out of their way to make a difference or to ease the burden for others.



In 1984, Welsh singer Bonny Tyler released a song which asked the question; *'Where have all the good men gone'*. The song *"Holding Out for a Hero"* was a song which was recorded for the soundtrack to the film *'Footloose'*. In asking the question, the song then goes on to outline what characteristics, in the singer's mind, constitutes a Hero:

Where have all the good men gone
And where are all the gods
Where's the streetwise Hercules
To fight the rising odds
Isn't there a white knight upon a fiery steed
Late at night I toss and I turn
And I dream of what I need

*I need a hero
I'm holding out for a hero 'till the end of the night
He's gotta be strong, and he's gotta be fast
And he's gotta be fresh from the fight
I need a hero
I'm holding out for a hero 'till the morning light
He's gotta be sure, and it's gotta be soon
And he's gotta be larger than life
Larger than life*

Somewhere after midnight
In my wildest fantasy
Somewhere just beyond my reach
There's someone reaching back for me
Racing on the thunder and rising with the heat
It's gonna take a Superman to sweep me off my feet

*I need a hero
I'm holding out for a hero 'till the end of the night
He's gotta be strong, and he's gotta be fast
And he's gotta be fresh from the fight
I need a hero
I'm holding out for a hero 'till the morning light
He's gotta be sure, and it's gotta be soon
And he's gotta be larger than life
I need a hero*

In **Hebrews 11:1** we read;

'Faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see'

Housegroup members were encouraged as we commenced the first part of our Lent Series *'From the Ram to the Lamb'* to read through the *'Hall of Fame'* found in Hebrews Chapter 11:1-40; and to imagine that the author had put their name into this list of ***'Heroes of the Faith'***. To think if there was something which they had done in response to God's prompting by faith for which they might be included? And if so, to praise God.

It was also suggested that if they couldn't think of anything, to pray that God would increase their faith and their willingness to step out boldly for him.

It's a valuable exercise and I encourage all those reading this worship bulletin to try this exercise for yourself too.

You see, God used some pretty unlikely individuals to accomplish his extraordinary work. In fact the pages of scripture are filled with stories of great heroes - men and women whom God used in unique and powerful ways to accomplish his purposes - but these people were far from perfect. You may have come across a summary, at some time or other, similar to the one I share with you here now...

Noah was a drunk. Abraham was too old. Isaac was a daydreamer. Jacob was a liar. Leah was ugly. Joseph was abused. Moses had a stuttering problem. Gideon was afraid. Samson had long hair and was a womanizer. Jeremiah and Timothy were too young. David had an affair and was a murderer. Elijah was suicidal. Isaiah preached naked. Jonah ran from God. Naomi was a widow. Job went bankrupt. Peter denied Christ. The Disciples fell asleep while praying. Martha worried about everything. The Samaritan woman was divorced, more than once. Zacchaeus was too small. Paul was too religious. Timothy had an ulcer... AND Lazarus was dead!

Did this stop God calling them? NO. Did this prevent God from using them? ABSOLUTELY NOT!



In **1 Corinthians 1:18-31** we read;

For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

For it is written:

*'I will destroy the wisdom of the wise;
the intelligence of the intelligent I will frustrate.'...*

...²⁶ Brothers and sisters, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth.²⁷ But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong.²⁸ God chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things – and the things that are not – to nullify the things that are,²⁹ so that no one may boast before him.³⁰ It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God – that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption.³¹ Therefore, as it is written: 'Let the one who boasts boast in the Lord.'

God didn't set out looking for *larger than life* heroes who were *strong* and *fast and sure* of themselves, but rather men and women whom would be regarded as Heroes for two primary reasons;

1. They believed in Him - not just for salvation but for every aspect of life
2. They acted on that faith and they would choose to honour Him even when it was difficult to do so.

When circumstances seem impossible—that's when true heroes of the faith will turn to God and lean on His strength and wisdom rather than depending on their own. People who keep their eyes fixed upon Him and who choose to trust His promises. People who would be known for their faith *and* their faithfulness.

There's another secular song which I'd like to bring to your attention in this bulletin; '*Search for the Hero*' which was written and released by the dance music band M People on the 12 June 1995.

In contrast to Bonny Tylor's '*I'm holding out for a Hero*' - M People sing '*You've got to search for the hero inside yourself*'...

Sometimes the river flows but nothing breathes
A train arrives but never leaves, it's a shame
Oh, life like love that's walked out of the door
Of being rich or being poor, such a shame

But it's then, then that faith arrives
To make your feelings alive
And that's why, you should keep on aiming high
Just seek yourself and you will shine

*You've got to search for the hero inside yourself
Search for the secrets you hide
Search for the hero inside yourself
Until you find the key to your life*

Take a moment to look at your reflection in a mirror; and as you do so - read these words from Isaiah 43:1-2;

***"Do not be afraid—I will save you.
I have called you by name—you are mine.
When you pass through deep waters, I will be with you;
your troubles will not overwhelm you.
When you pass through fire, you will not be burned;
the hard trials that come will not hurt you.
For I am the Lord your God."***



By God's grace I encourage you to *search for the Hero inside of you*. To realise how you can make a difference to those around you—God helping you, empowering & equipping you.

A friend of mine has a beautiful Dog called Mr. Collins - or to give him his full title 'Mr Adrian Jon Wilmslow Collins. Mr Collins is a two year old Jackapoo, described by his owner as the less classy but more comedic of the poodle breeds. Mr Collins has his own Facebook Page and in the 'About' section of the page - you will find this reason for it's existence *'If life or world events get a bit overwhelming then Mr Collins is here to help you Paws for a smile'*.

Well Mr Collins has certainly given me plenty of cause to smile in recent days - not least through the simply delightful and comic conversation which he has with his owner / room mate / best friend.

And with His permission I'm sharing his most recent post with you—a post which 'pinged' on my phone just as I'd typed the first sentence at the top of this page ...

Not all super heroes wear a cape, some wear a bandana...apparently.

Miss G tells me daily that I'm her hero, I'm happy to hear that but I'm not sure how it can be because I'm just me.

Let me think this through a little. I try to make her smile when she is sad, I use my floppy ears to listen to her talking to me, which she does, every day, a lot. I travel alongside her in the car so she knows she is not on her own, and when she sits down I know I have the space of the whole of the house but I choose to curl up next to her to remind her that she is loved. All these little everyday actions build up to making one big beautiful difference.

Be generous with your kindness, be you be a hero. #Pawsforasmile



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Suggested Songs for Worship this week:

Meekness and Majesty (SASB 383)

Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart! (SB 573)

Songster Piece: We are in the army <https://youtu.be/PNF46oPpzbo>

**Have a great week
With every blessing**
Major Liz

THIS WEEKS ACTIVITIES

Virtual Coffee Morning - Each Tuesday at 11am on Zoom

<https://zoom.us/j/94036559399?pwd=S3lCVFU1QklkcWVsQnJrRUpWNDlNdz09>

Meeting ID: 940 3655 9399 / Passcode: 236837

LENT House Groups FROM THE RAM TO THE LAMB- PART 2

Major Liz's group (Tuesday 9th Feb) and BM Bob's (Thursday 11th Feb)

Newcastle CoG (Children of God - Sunday School)

Next Sunday (14th February) at 2pm there will be a Zoom meeting for our CoG's. Joy will be forwarding the meeting link to those concerned this week. Please pray for members of our Sunday School and for Joy and Adrian as they continue to provide weekly teaching materials to help nurture them. Pray too for members of your Youth, and for David, Tracy and Stephen and for all that they do in encouraging members to stay connected over this time including arranging a weekly quiz & chat via Zoom.



SELF DENIAL 2021

One of the ways in which we can **Be a Hero** is by helping to Rebuild Hope & Resilience with our partners in mission throughout the International Salvation Army.

This week sees the launch of the 2021 Self-Denial Appeal, promoted over five weeks, to allow us time to make a considered decision about our 'giving up', in order that we 'might give' the money saved to support Salvation Army mission and ministry in countries around the world. The theme for 2021 is, 'Rebuilding Hope and resilience together', a great theme given that whilst we may not all be in the same boat, we are certainly all in the same Covid-19 storm raging around our world.

Over the next few weeks, in our weekly NCT Connected and Worship via Zoom on Sundays we will be looking at 1 John 4 which is all about loving God and loving each other.

During Self Denial we are reminded that without love for our fellow brothers and sisters, The Salvation Army around the world wouldn't exist. Without love, there is no hope and no ability in people's hearts to help people recover from the difficulties they face. Or as James writes, *"What good is it, dear brothers and sisters, if you say you have faith but don't show it by your actions? ... I will show you my faith by my good deeds"* (James 2:14, 18).

And so, as we consider our 'actions' of self-denial over the coming weeks, let us also remember to take 'action' in prayer -

Pray for those who are suffering in the world through conflict, violence, poverty, natural disasters and who lack necessities such as clean water, food and shelter.

Pray for those who struggle to find acceptance in their own communities due to prejudice or ignorance.

Pray for Christian brothers and sisters enduring civil conflict, persecution, poverty and injustice as they seek to serve and use their gifts to build community and care for others.

Pray that we will be moved to support our international family of God in regular prayer and financial support.

Pray for officers, leaders and missionaries around the world, particularly those ministering to people in remote areas, for their protection and devotion to the Gospel of sharing the Good News of Jesus.

A prayer:

Father God, we thank you that your extravagant love poured out for us on the cross and poured into us by the Holy Spirit. We thank you for your provision of material blessings in our lives. During this season of self-denial we ask that we might taste and experience more of the depth and breadth and length and height of your amazing love in order that we might live out our Christian faith in prayer and action. Amen

PLEASE NOTE

Each week within the context of our Sunday Morning 'Zoom Worship' we shall watch together the weekly Self-Denial Videos which have been produced and these will also be issued in transcript form for those unable to join with us on Zoom.

Self Denial Envelopes will be delivered to you in time for the Altar Service on the 7th March. If anyone would prefer to make their donation by bank transfer—please can I ask that you wait until instructions on how to do this are issued - as specific coding / referencing will be required, which will be slightly different to that use for regular cartridge giving. Failure to use the correct referencing will result in the incorrect allocation of funds. Thank you.