

## Reflection

Life seems very difficult just now, with the Covid19 virus busily reproducing itself across the world. If you are retired like many of us it limits where we can go and who we can safely see, but the consequences may not be unbearable – a friend said to me “I could get to like life as simple as this.” But for many young people, and those with families, or who now have no job and no income, it’s more than difficult – and we pray that scientists across the world quickly find a vaccine to protect us and give more freedom.

Now - who remembers the 1968 Hong Kong flu, a cousin to our present virus ? It killed up to 4 million people worldwide, with more than 100,000 of those in the USA alone - and this present variant is still some way from achieving that. I was at university then and I have no memory of it. There was almost no publicity at the time, and no limitations that I can recall on our daily lives. And, crucially, no attempt to find a vaccine. So, while all may seem dark now, perhaps in 50 years when people look back there may be a different perspective on these troubles. Incidentally, 1968 was also the famous “summer of love” which apparently spread around the world from San Francisco. Well, I’m here to tell you that if it did, it never got as far as Newcastle!

But our best perspective on any of our troubles is simply to look to God. Thousands of years ago God spoke to His people through the prophets and Patriarchs, and offered them His first Covenant. 2000 years ago the world changed fundamentally, with God coming among His people through Jesus – but this time with a message for all people, not just for a chosen few.

The message he left has gathered force over the years since then, resonating with more than 2 billion Christians of all races. His voice of peace and love, and the promise of eternal life with God, if we choose it, is as strong now as then. And remember Jesus left an Advocate to help and guide us, who is always with us, and who we can turn to now and in any time of trouble. That guide is the Holy Spirit. Here to work in us, and through us, for us and the good of all people. But **we** don’t have any rights to use the Holy Spirit as we wish. God will use **us** if he chooses to do so, and for that to happen we have to embrace God. We have to **believe**. If we trust the Holy Spirit to guide us in all things, opening our hearts to God, we will have that peace and eternal life which Jesus offers to us all.

So I would like to leave you with the opening and closing words of our Psalm:

“In you, Lord my God, I put my trust ---- because my hope, Lord, is in you.”