

Live in the light of death

dkm Jan 2020

Just before New Year I had the privilege of attending the funeral of an aunt. I say 'privilege' because of the words I heard at the funeral service, words from the wisdom of Solomon: 'Better to go to the house of mourning, than to go to the house of feasting' (Ecclesiastes 7:2). New Year is a time of feasting and drinking for many people. But in our city New Year 2020 was celebrated under the cloud of bushfires destroying houses up and down the coast of our land. This first week of the New Year saw another funeral, that of a young man killed while fighting these fires. We pray for his grieving widow and children.

People did not know if they should be celebrating New Year or mourning the devastation of the bushfires. We came together here at church to pray for our nation, to pray for those suffering in the bushfires, and to pray for those suffering the terrible drought. We plead with the Lord in his mercy to send rain. At the same time, and in the context of these disasters, we prayed for the Lord to send revival, spiritual revival to our land.

The Bible makes it clear that the Lord sends rain and withholds rain (Deuteronomy 28:24, 1Kings 18:41-46, James 5:17-18). Jesus said God sends rain on the just and the unjust (Matthew 5:45). Let us not forget this truth, even as our ears are filled with the voices of reporters, 'experts' and politicians arguing about the causes of the drought and the bushfires.

As we enter 2020 we do not know what lies before us. People are frustrated, but it has ever been so, and will remain so. The future of our nation, and our own future, is in the hands of God. What we know for certain is that we will die, if not this year then the next, or the one after that etc. My aunty was over 90 years of age so her death not unexpected but still there were tears at her funeral. But there was also hope because we who know the Lord do not sorrow as those who have no hope (1Thessalonians 4:13). Those who are without God have no hope (Ephesians 2:12). So if you are without hope, repent of your sin and come to the Lord Jesus Christ.

In this context we see the wisdom of the words I heard at the funeral. At funerals we are confronted by death; we are forced to stop and think about death. No one thinks about death while partying- unless someone succumbs to an overdose of drugs. At a funeral we are reminded that death 'is the end of all men, and the living will take it to heart' (Ecclesiastes 7:2).

We should be living in the light of death at all times. This is not a morbid idea; it is facing up to reality. Moreover, when we believe in Jesus Christ, in his death and his resurrection, we know that death is not the end. In fact, we can look forward to being with Christ on the other side of the grave. 'I desire to be with Christ' said the apostle Paul (Philippians 1:23). Paul was not a morbid fellow; he lived life to the full. He travelled all over the world telling people about Jesus. He lived every day in fellowship with Jesus Christ. What more do you desire?