

# Pastoral Update #4

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Date: 10 April 2020

Preacher: Derek Lamont

[ 0 : 0 0 ] Hi, it's Friday the 10th of April 2020. Good Friday today, Easter weekend. And this is the fourth of the pastoral updates that we're doing from St Sears Free Church. I'm full of good phrases today, great phrases actually. I feel inspired, kind of dad-like inspiration I think. But before I get on to the good phrases for you today, just one big thank you from us, from the leadership team to the congregation for the offering that we had last Sunday morning online, which was the first time we tried it for safe families. And we've taken in over £1,200, which is really tremendous in the current situation and we're so grateful for that and I know that the guys at Safe Families are ecstatic as well. So thank you so much for that tremendous support. A couple of things I want to say in this pastoral update. The first thing is look up in the lockdown. Okay, from a week on Sunday, the 19th, that is, you heard it first here, seven days of prayer. Okay, we do seven days of prayer twice a year and this is our April seven days of prayer every morning and you're getting an extra hour in bed from 8am. We'll be praying online. Extraordinary times require extraordinary prayer. So I don't think you'll look back from heaven and say, well, I think I prayed too much for my friends who don't know Jesus. I don't think any of us will think that and there's lots and lots of things, apart from just praying for our friends, there's lots of things to be praying about. So look up in the lockdown, but also dare to share. Okay, remember that this is Easter weekend and it's Easter Sunday coming up. In fact, if you're watching this and the run up to the service because we put the pastoral video on, then it is Easter Sunday and it's a great opportunity to ask your friends to join us for our Easter

Sunday morning service. Great opportunity to ask them to come and see why the events of the first Easter remain so crucial for today. Encourage them to click the link, dare to share, get them to click the link and they can do so in the comfort of their own home.

And we'll pray that they can sneak a watch of the service and then be overwhelmed by the message and the truth of Jesus Christ for today. Then also, keep on keeping on.

Can I encourage you that way? Keep learning to use the online platforms. I know they're not ideal and it's not the best way to move forward, but do please keep using them with City Group, make connections, watch the services, but also keep in contact with people. Phone people, phone is good. Take events one day at a time. Keep asking for God's help. Reach out to others and offer to help them, but also ask for help. Please, I beg of you, ask for help if you need help at this time. This lockdown is a long road that we're on and we need to keep on keeping on.

So I just want to finish taking up my big pulpit Bible, Luke 23, verses 44 to 46. It was now about the sixth hour. This is the crucifixion and darkness came over the land until the ninth hour, for the sun had stopped shining and the curtains of the temple was torn in two. Jesus called out with a loud voice, Father, into your hands I commit my spirit. When he had said this, he breathed his last.

There's no doubt we were going through a dark time just now, absolutely, but there has never been a darkness like that on the cross. It wasn't just a physical darkness, it was a spiritual darkness where Jesus was taking on the wrath and the cost. The wrath of God and the cost for our sins, it was hell for him on the cross and that darkness shrouded Jesus. That is so that we can know and continue to know his light in our darkness, his presence, his love, his purpose, his victory through and ultimately its destruction, the destruction of darkness entirely, sin, darkness, evil and death.

[ 4 : 5 5 ] So we remember that as we come into Easter weekend and may God bless you and may God bless us all as we continue to work through these difficult times.