

## THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK, by Liz Holder

Wednesday 20 May 2020

### **“DO NOT BE AFRAID”**

There are a lot of reasons to be afraid just now. Am I or my family going to get the coronavirus? Will I survive? Will I have a job to go back to? Am I going to be able to pay my bills? Are my elderly relatives going to die alone and abandoned? Are we going to be able to attend their funeral? Are my children safe to return to school? Will easing the lockdown create a second peak of virus infection?

In this Mental Health Awareness Week, we can be sure that there are many people who are struggling, mostly behind closed doors. And there are probably more reasons to be overwhelmed by fear at this point in our lives than for any of us before. People who lived during WW2 must have experienced this kind of fear.

It is easy to lose sight of God and his love in a global crisis. Where is He? Why isn't He doing something about it? Why did He let it happen? These are big questions and it is right that we ask them.

But God does not promise to take away hard times. He promises to be with us through them, and that promise holds true even in a pandemic.

Perfect love casts out fear. God is holding us all in the palm of His hand, whatever the outcome for any one of us. Thousands are dying around the world but God is holding them too. We are weeping and He is weeping with us.

One of my favourite songs is “Do Not Be Afraid” – listen to it on YouTube (the link is <https://youtu.be/iXnD1jELtI8>) and the words are below). Sing along with it and ask God to hold you close in all your fears.

*Do not be afraid, for I have redeemed you.  
I have called you by your name; you are Mine.*

*When you walk through the waters, I'll be with you,  
you will never sink beneath the waves.  
Do not be afraid, for I have redeemed you.  
I have called you by your name; you are Mine.*

*When the fire is burning all around you,  
You will never be consumed by the flames.  
Do not be afraid, for I have redeemed you.  
I have called you by your name; you are Mine.*

*When the fear of loneliness is looming,  
remember I am at your side.  
Do not be afraid, for I have redeemed you.  
I have called you by your name; you are Mine.*

*When you dwell in the exile of the stranger,  
remember you are precious in my eyes.  
Do not be afraid, for I have redeemed you.  
I have called you by your name; you are Mine.*

*You are Mine, oh my child; I am your Father,  
and I love you with a perfect love.  
Do not be afraid, for I have redeemed you.  
I have called you by your name; you are Mine.*

Words and music: Gerard Markland (b 1953)

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