

Hope in Uncertain Times by Nigel Coles Part 2: Bringing Hope

Hope in uncertain times. These times are definitely uncertain for us all. Last week the first person I knew personally, died from Covid-19. Margaret was 94, so a good age, by anyone's standards. The danger is she is now a statistic, no longer a person. Forgotten amidst the rising tide of deaths resulting from the coronavirus. Maggie and I will remember her as a loving and faithful follower of Jesus Christ. She was unable to have children of her own, so lavished kindness and love on many others, ours included and we shall always be grateful for her being a part of our lives.

By the time we get through the other side, of the coronavirus pandemic, I guess every one of us will know someone who has died as a result. The wave of grief and loss will be something most of us have never encountered before, nor want to again.

One of the awful things which has come home to me this week is the isolation some who have been admitted into hospital have encountered, because those whom they love are not allowed to visit and be alongside them physically or talk.

This week, I've been particularly drawn to the episode when Jesus washes the feet of his disciples just before the Last Supper. Listen to this and I pray your hope will rise because you'll realise you need never be alone, *and* you can bring hope to others.

It was just before the Passover Festival. Jesus knew that the hour had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end.

John 13 chapter 2

² The evening meal was in progress, and the devil had already prompted Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot, to betray Jesus. ³ Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God; ⁴ so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel round his waist. ⁵ After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped round him.

⁶ He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, 'Lord, are you going to wash my feet?'

⁷ Jesus replied, 'You do not realise now what I am doing, but later you will understand.'

⁸ 'No,' said Peter, 'you shall never wash my feet.'

Jesus answered, 'Unless I wash you, you have no part with me.'

⁹ 'Then, Lord,' Simon Peter replied, 'not just my feet but my hands and my head as well!'

¹⁰ Jesus answered, 'Those who have had a bath need only to wash their feet; their whole body is clean. And you are clean, though not every one of you.' ¹¹ For he knew who was going to betray him, and that was why he said not every one was clean.

¹² When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. 'Do you understand what I have done for you?' he asked them. ¹³ 'You call me "Teacher" and "Lord", and rightly so, for that is what I am. ¹⁴ Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. ¹⁵ I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. ¹⁶ Very truly I tell you, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. ¹⁷ Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them.

Character is not made in a crisis, but it is revealed for what it is. Here, Jesus reveals not only his true character but the character he wants ALL his disciples to develop.

This is who Jesus is: the one who comes right down to where we are.

He then says: I tell you, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. ¹⁷ Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them.

We're unable to literally wash people's feet. To be honest, I'm not mad on the idea even when not socially distancing, but we can serve people in various practical ways, as long as it is safe and in the best interests of others to do so.

It meant a lot to us when our neighbour offered to do some shopping. If it's not wise for us to be doing such things, pick up the phone. You may be only person the person on the other end speaks to today. A study last year (so before this crisis) said two thirds of UK adults feel they have nobody to talk to about their problems. Why not ask whoever you phone if they have any concerns?

I know there will many families who will remember my friend Margaret this week, because of the kindness and generosity she showed - those are things we can all pass on.

To watch the video, go to: <https://www.thefuelcast.com/>

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