

Thoughts from the Manse 21st August 2020



Who dares wins is the motto of the SAS, and 'He who dares wins' is a common misquote derived from this motto. In life sometimes we have to take a chance. One of my favourite television programmes is Pointless, and it is often the case that Alexander Armstrong encourages contestants to take a chance as playing safe rarely wins the game, yet time and again contestants fail to take a risk and score too highly.

In the story of Moses, we are introduced to Moses as his mother takes a chance and places him in a reed basket in the river rather than see him killed by the Pharaoh. He is rescued as an anonymous baby by Pharaoh's daughter, in a twist his own mother cares for him until he is weaned and then he is raised by the Pharaoh's daughter. Without that risk, the story of the people of God would have been very different.



Why have I thought of this now? Well, I believe that love overcomes fear and in truth have mostly seen fear and love as the two opposite ends of a sliding scale, a straight line. However, that was before Covid 19 introduced a whole new level of fear and the new element in the equation risk. We have seen love overcoming fear as key workers have placed themselves in danger to serve communities. We have seen love in action in the caring within communities, shopping for those shielding, phoning and checking on lonely people, being there for one another in shared initiatives. But, many are also experiencing fear, fear for themselves and fear for the future, and this is changing the relationship between love and fear.

I am in the at greatest risk category, as is my husband for different reasons, and our children who live with us have been very conscious of risk in how they have approached life since Lockdown. During Lockdown although we were worried it did not feel overwhelming, we knew the risk and we acted accordingly. So, what has changed? Since the easing of Lockdown, we are experiencing a different level of fear, and witnessing behaviour which is a game changer.



We should be able, with appropriate measure, to begin to engage in other activities but it does depend on everyone understanding risk and it appears that is not the case. People do not wear face masks when they are advised to do so, young people gather in groups far larger than advised and in closer proximity than advised. They have assessed their risk and are prepared to take a chance but the risk to others

because of their actions does not seem to register. Organisations do risk assessments and put in place a code for their workers and those whom they visit but the workers are not adhering to the code and we find ourselves at greater risk than we expected.

I was saddened this week, to hear that my daughters, having studied the Covid 19 rules for Whipsnade Zoo, found themselves feeling at too much risk, and on using the toilet, putting on face masks as advised, found they were the only ones doing so. Worse still, when a child present asked their mother why my daughter was wearing a face mask, the reply was 'because she is paranoid'. They left the zoo after only 50 minutes as none of the measures identified on the website as in place were actually being implemented and far too many people had been admitted to the zoo at the same time. Worse still there was no respect for other users of the zoo.

So, what of the future. It seems we need to encourage a healthy respect for this virus and more importantly a respect for one another's personal needs. We all want to engage with a new normal, but it needs us all to recognise the risks and act in love for one another, which means overcoming fear by respecting individual circumstances and working for the greater good.

What we do has consequences for others and when we decide to take a chance this must be a factor in our decision making. It is called responsibility. Love and fear are still opposite ends of the spectrum, and risk has always been a factor, but if we are to overcome the effects of this virus then we all need to take responsibility and show our love in considered actions.

Love is...



...taking responsibility