**North East Circuit of Independent Methodist Churches**

**Devotional for Sunday 26th April 2020**

**Introduction**

* We are now into our second month of living within the guidelines of being socially isolated.
* We are becoming accustomed to the limits of our freedoms and maybe we are looking forward to that day when we shall be reunited one with another in our church gatherings on a Sunday and midweek.
* I wonder what it is that we most desire?

**Hymn: Blessed Assurance**

Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine;  
Oh, what a foretaste of glory divine!  
Heir of salvation, purchase of God,  
Born of His Spirit, washed in His blood.

This is my story, this is my song,  
Praising my Saviour all the day long.  
This is my story, this is my song,  
Praising my Saviour all the day long.

Perfect submission, perfect delight,  
Visions of rapture now burst on my sight;  
Angels descending, bring from above  
Echoes of mercy, whispers of love.

Perfect submission, all is at rest,  
I in my Saviour am happy and blest;  
Watching and waiting, looking above,  
Filled with His goodness, lost in His love.

**Bible Reading: Psalm 37**

3Trust in the Lord and do good;  
    dwell in the land and enjoy safe pasture.  
4Take delight in the Lord,  
    and he will give you the desires of your heart.

5Commit your way to the Lord;  
    trust in him and he will do this:  
6He will make your righteous reward shine like the dawn,  
    your vindication like the noonday sun.

**Devotional:**

* Psalm 37:4 is one of those verses that is often twisted by people.
* We may hear it said, “God will give you the desires of your heart so name it and claim it.” To do that is wrong and we miss the whole point of the verse.
* The desire of many of our hearts is to have our freedom and liberty restored.
* To resume our Sunday and midweek meetings.
* To see our sporting and cultural life get back to some kind of normality.
* This verse is not speaking of those kinds of desires. Look again at verse 4. It does promise us that God will give us the desires of our hearts, but notice what comes before the promise? Take delight in the Lord!
* The more we take delight in the Lord leads us to discovering that our greatest desire must be a closer walk with God to quote the old hymn.
* Did not Fanny Crosby get it right in her hymn (opposite) when she wrote: ‘Perfect submission, perfect delight?’ Do we only experience perfect delight when we are in perfect submission to God, as Jesus himself said in Matt 22:37: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind”
* When we delight in God, when we love God with all that we are, then the desires of our heart will be transformed.
* Our focus will be turned from ourselves and onto the things of God. Those things that once were a priority become secondary.
* Does not our world need to know of that peace that passes understanding? That peace and even joy which helps us in troubled times like we are experiencing at the moment.
* What are our desires at the moment?
* Can we say with Graham Kendrick:

Now my heart's desire is to know You more

To be found in You and known as Yours

To possess by faith what I could not earn

All surpassing gift of righteousness.

Knowing You, Jesus, Knowing You

There is no greater thing

You're my all, You're the best

You're my joy, my righteousness

And I love You Lord.

**Prayer:**

O God our Heavenly Father, we thank you that you are the giver of every good and perfect gift. Thank you for your desire to bless us. Help us reach the hidden depths of knowing what it is to ‘delight in You’ and then help us discover the desires that you would have for us. Help us our current situation. We continue to thank you for each other, many of whom we have not seen for some weeks.

We thank you for the lives of your servants who you have called home this week, and pray you will comfort those who mourn. Yet again, we continue to pray for our decision makers and frontline workers.

**The Lord’s Prayer**