**Reflection for Sunday 24 May 2020**

“he was taken up to heaven as they watched him, and a cloud hid him from their sight” (Acts 1: 9)

Ascension. Not something in the free churches we spend a lot of time debating. But what did happen to Jesus after his Resurrection and before Pentecost? We read of his appearances to the disciples and of the coming of the Spirit, but often miss out the bit where he goes back to his Father in heaven.

Gone but not forgotten. While Jesus was no longer physically present following his ascension, he was no less present in the lives of the disciples. More so on the arrival of the Spirit, but they long remembered his words, his actions – why else would they have written them down for others to read?

In this time of lockdown, we can relate to not being able to physically see our friends and family. We may not be able to be with them, but they are no less a part of our lives. Communication with them is essential, but nothing beats a get together, or family hug, or meal with friends. While we understand the need for the separation, it does not make it any easier.

Often when we are in difficult circumstances it can feel as if a cloud separates us from God, and we cannot see him or feel his presence. We become angry because we feel he has abandoned us at the time of our greatest need. We may find difficulty in prayer because of this perceived separation. But God is very much still here.

When we face our fears, and feel isolated and alone, let us remember the words at the end of the Footprints poem – “it was then that I carried you”.

May we feel safe in God’s protective care as we continue to face the difficulties of the current crisis. As we start to think about moving forward, let us remember it is ok to not be ok about releasing restrictions and going out into the new “normal”. This is going to take time and there is no right or wrong way to feel about that.

Know, as always, you are held in prayer and that God’s love surrounds you always.

Keep safe

RevRuth