

Hope

Dear Friends,

As I write this we are experiencing one of those uncertain patches of weather when at one time it looks like the sun will come out but a bit later it looks likely to rain. I wonder if this weather does not reflect our uncertainty as the nation tentatively emerges from lockdown. People want to get out. Some folk are now socializing as if the pandemic had ended. But I suspect most of us have our reservations and fears. There is talk of another surge, especially when cold weather begins. There is talk of how the virus can be more widespread in the air within enclosed spaces. There are, in short, a lot of unknowns, unknowns that can cause us to be fearful.

When I first flew in an airplane I remember my amazement at how, although the sky at the airport before takeoff was cloudy, after the plane had climbed high enough, the clouds disappeared; and we began to fly in a sunny space with a blue sky above. I often use this when I am trying to tell children about God. I liken God to the sun shining above the clouds that can darken our lives and make us fearful and anxious.

Of course, I cannot leave it at that. If I did, the children could think that God is up there in God's own serene and beautiful world, completely detached from us and all our troubles beneath the clouds below. This is where Jesus comes in. God in Jesus became a human being. God humbled himself to become one of us, to share our life and all that we go through, our joys as well as our sorrows. When we consider our sorrows, let us remember that few of us will have to undergo the sort of agony and pain that Jesus underwent on the cross. God became one of us to show us his love for us. No, God in Jesus did not give us an explanation for why there is so much pain and suffering that comes to the innocent. But he did show us in Jesus his passionate concern for us, his deep and abiding love for us.

Most importantly, in Jesus, God has given us wonderful hope for the future, for the pain and suffering of the cross were followed by the resurrection on that first Easter. The message is clear to all who believe: dark days and death will come; but life and the love of God have the final say. Our creator is also a re-creator. And this re-creation is not restricted to the next life; it's for the here and now as well.

So I return to that thought about the sun shining above the clouds. Sometimes a simple image such as this can inspire in us the hope we need to get through times such as these.

Yours in Christ,
Charles Brown