

18. because we look not at what can be seen but at what cannot be seen; for what can be seen is temporary, but what cannot be seen is eternal.

After a few poorly days, last week ended with an emergency overnight stay in hospital. Amidst the organised chaos of an extremely busy and noisy unit, and without energy for conversation I watched as if in a dream, a patient try to escape – twice; another frantically taking a wheeled walker-frame for a fast spin around the ward dodging those trying to stop them and then sometime later, the emergency alarm suddenly rang out very loudly (usually used for cardiac emergencies when a medical team come running), thankfully it turned out not to be a cardiac event. At the time, it was like watching a cross between a serious and often sombre documentary, with the occasional frenzy of a Mr. Bean skit thrown in! A sense of humour was important for all to survive the pace of events. Through these and many other happenings in little under 24 hours, the staff were wonderful, hardworking, positive and caring in this ever changing and demanding place.

My thoughts then turned to the pandemic when countless numbers of people experienced the very real fear, pain, displacement and bereavement from all that a global medical emergency entails. Today, many continue to struggle with the ongoing effects from covid. I'm sure many of us know of others not just in our country but also much further afield, whose lives remain deeply affected in various ways from that life-changing period.

People still ask why God allowed the pandemic, wars and other tragedies to happen and whether our sin is to blame. We are mortal creatures and as such will all die someday so, are our human choices to blame, or does the blame lie squarely with God....or with something/someone else? What do you think?

I have found the well-known verse from 2 Corinthians to be of great assurance time and time again and my prayer is that you may too.

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A promise for the future, a promise of Hope.

Revd Tish Bird