

**Derbyshire Rural Chaplaincy 'Thought for the Week' during Lent 2021 - Rev'd Alan Griggs (Lead Rural Chaplain – Derbyshire)**

I am reading a book called the Three Mile and Hour God written by a Japanese Christian called Kasuke Koyama. Kasuke suggests that the speed of God's love is three miles an hour; walking speed! A very different pace to our technologically dependent world. The idea reminds me of something a farmer said in another book called The Land That Made Us: The Peak District Farmer's Story, written with support from the Farming Life Centre. As the farmer looked back at a time *before* modern farming machinery he said, "When you were walking, you were seeing things". Jesus, as far as we know, always walked (apart from entering Jerusalem on a donkey) and I often wonder what sights Jesus and his disciples must have seen as they walked through the beautiful hills and valleys of Galilee and Judea, on their way to Jerusalem.

Kasuke also explains how our technologically driven world will always find the shortest distance between two points, to increase efficiency. Straight lines! We often want everything to arrive yesterday and in the midst of this pandemic we have been forced to wait and slow down. Of course, the use of technology should be celebrated and we are incredibly grateful for the work undertaken to produce vaccines. Also, who would not be grateful for the kettle to make a cuppa or the telephone to keep us connected, let alone the advancements in computer technology and the internet?

Yet, like Jesus and his first century world and farming before modern technology, when we slow down, we begin to see the wonderful things that surround us every day. Perhaps it's a moment watching birds on the feeder, or to stop and watch a large flock of sociable Redwings I recently spotted on a walk, or a moment of quiet in the milking parlour as you admire your stock, or the wonder of new life that is ready to burst as the weather warms. Thank God for the seasons that are an assurance of God's care, as they bring us full circle every year offering us new beginnings and new hope. As we travel through this season of Lent, if we can take moments to purposely slow down, I wonder what wonderful things we will see as we travel with Jesus to Jerusalem. Another way I try and slow down is to take some time to talk to a trusted friend who is able to listen and help me 'see things'. And a reminder that the Derbyshire Rural Chaplaincy is always here to journey with you; to listen if you feel caught in the fast lane of life.

Finally, a picture from my mum's collection! This picture is of Bradbourne Brook in Derbyshire. I challenge you to spot a straight line (apart from the tree trunk) in this artistic re-creation of this beautiful pastoral scene. A reminder that nature does not consist of straight lines, but beautiful gentle curves and circular shapes that bring rest for our souls.



Oil by Lesley Griggs – Bradbourne Brook, Derbyshire.

Call the Derbyshire Rural Chaplaincy on 07710 088972