



THINK ON THESE THINGS.....

**Reading:** Romans 1:8 -12

8 First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith is being reported all over the world. 9 God, whom I serve in my spirit in preaching the gospel of his Son, is my witness how constantly I remember you 10 in my prayers at all times; and I pray that now at last by God's will the way may be opened for me to come to you.

11 I long to see you so that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to make you strong— 12 that is, that you and I may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith.

**Reflection:**

For Paul, sharing the Gospel was about building a community, and maintaining strong, life-giving relationships with the believers. After establishing a church, Paul stayed in contact and tried to get back to visit it. He did this both because he longed to share a "spiritual gift" (verse 11) with them, but also because he longed to be encouraged by their faith.

So, while Paul was the apostle who had drawn them to Christ and who offered them his wisdom and ministry, he also knew that the believers, no matter how new or inexperienced they were in the faith, also had gifts they could give him that would enrich and strengthen him.

Their love, their hospitality, and their encouragement were all valuable ways they could contribute to the life and ministry of this apostle.

It is easy, when times get tough, (and they certainly are right now!) to feel that we have nothing to give to others. However, I have been so encouraged to hear stories of members in our church family meeting together in gardens, sharing tea and cake and have a good socially distanced chat! Pat and I have also enjoyed seeing many of you on your front doorsteps and being able to have even the briefest conversations is such a help and boost.

I am also aware that some of you have not been able to get out that often, and rely on the telephone contact from family and friends. Be assured that there are many of our church family who have you in their thoughts and prayers. At the very least, as Paul does for the Romans, we can pray for one another and seek to bless and encourage each other.

**Breath-Prayer for Today:** Dear Lord, in these difficult times, help us to provide what support and encouragement we can, thereby bringing your Presence close to those we meet.