

30th March 2020

Elizabeth Gay

The word that I'm sensing from God for the church in this time of huge change and physical isolation is "cocoon".

Sometimes we speak of a cocoon as a place of soft, cushioned retreat from the world, somewhere to hide and hibernate in inactivity; but that's not at all the sense I have in this.

The cocoon the Lord is speaking of, where he's placing us as a church now, is a place of intensive transformation.

Before the cocoon, the caterpillar crawls along twigs, eating leaves and growing. That's its role, and it's vital.

But when it emerges from the cocoon, it's in a very different form:

it's beautiful, attracting attention and bringing delight;

it's able to fly, free of the physical limitations that had constrained it, to go so much further and faster than it ever could before;

it pollinates plants - it's productive;

and it reproduces itself.

In between those two forms is the time in the cocoon. There, it's in a place apart, wrapped up in a way that separates it from what was its usual way of life. But that's not a quiet and restful time out: in there, major changes are underway as the creature is transformed, radically and rapidly, into what it was designed to be.

And that's what I sense the Lord saying to us as a church in this season of physical isolation, that throughout this time he is working in us to bring about more of the transformation we dream of, the transformation we have prayed for, even when we had only a limited idea of what that might be.

Through the cocoon time, we're in the midst of those radical changes, with transformation happening at an often dizzyingly fast pace. Just as we start to become accustomed to one change, it morphs right on into the next one, and it's hard to recognise ourselves amidst all that. It's a wild ride, but through it, we as a church community are becoming a truer expression of the Kingdom of Heaven in our wider community, as our good God intends us to be – a more attractive, productive, effective church able to go into more of the world around us than we've ever done in the past, "reproducing" ourselves in the form of many more new "caterpillar-becoming-butterfly" believers and churches.

As I was writing this down I was reminded of the beautiful and powerful message of Ephesians 3: 20-21:

"Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen."

24th March 2020

Sam Sterland

"I am working in the world at this time, using the virus. I am shaking people from their complacent lives. I am showing them how little control they have. I am paralyzing governments and countries. Some will blame me for this, and indeed, I have allowed it to happen. People will not usually turn and follow me until they see the hollowness of their idols and the empty things they have placed their hope in.

So, this is a time for my church, my people to burn brightly - with my Spirit empowering and anointing them. This is a time for confidence, for being a beacon of peace and security in me, for being salt and light.

Now more than ever, know my peace, rest in me, confident in who I AM and who you are in me."