

FOUNDERS DAY

Thursday 2nd July is Founders day in The Salvation Army. On 2nd July 1865 the Rev William Booth and his wife Catherine began their ministry outside the Blind Beggar public house in poverty-stricken east London. This would become the Salvation Army, which now, 155 years later is at work in 131 countries. Happy birthday Salvation Army.



Five years ago in 2015, an International congress was held in London for 5 days from 1st to 5th July covering Founders day. Thousands of Salvationists and friends from all over the world gathered in London at the O2 arena to mark this historic event and unite under the theme, Boundless, the whole world redeeming.

Some of you will remembering watching the live stream of the evening services at our hall and seeing Kathryn and I playing timbrels with 150 others on the Friday evening, and coming up to watch the march down the Mall on the Sunday, where Kathryn and I were privileged to march behind the International Staff Band and play our timbrels again. What an amazing experience.



It is this current climate it's hard to imagine all those people together!! And I can't help but wonder if we will ever be able to do anything like that again!!!

So it was a wonderful time of celebration. We sang on more than one occasion the words of the Founders song.

O boundless Salvation, deep ocean of love
O fullness of mercy Christ brought from above.
The whole world redeeming, so rich and so free;
Now flowing for all men, come flow over me.

In this new normal, when we cannot sing with gusto that song together, are the words any less meaningful? Of course not. God's Salvation is still as boundless, it's still there for the whole world and it's still there to flow over you and me. While we cannot meet together in the way we did maybe we need to be aware even more of God's love flowing over us.

The work of the Salvation Army that the Booth's began all those years ago is still as relevant today, especially in these times as we struggle with Covid 19.

God still calls us to action, just as he did when the Salvation Army was first raised up.

Three months before William Booth was promoted to glory he made his famous I'll fight address where he spoke of all the sad, bad and unjust things in the world and said while they still existed he would fight for the right, fight to the very end.

The Salvation Army has just produced a You Tube clip based on this speech but updated for 2020. I would encourage you to watch it by using this link

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=37LPPbJxguY>

Words of Scripture from Mark 12 30-31(NIV) say this “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. The second is this: ‘Love your neighbour as yourself.’ There is no commandment greater than these.”

And Colossians 3:23-24 (NIV) says ‘whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving.’

Having accepted the boundless love of God we are called to action. I hear you say, and I say myself, but what can I do in these days of lockdown? I share words I have read this week taken from the Salvation Army silver linings. ‘What about us and our calling? Sometimes, doubt keeps us stuck, wondering if we really heard God or just imagined it. We can even doubt God would want to use us. Sometimes self-doubt makes us feel certain that someone else is better, younger, a better speaker or more equipped. But today God still calls each one of us, some to be an encourager, a parent, a good friend, a wise counsellor, a prayer warrior.

We are still called to action and where God calls he will equip and I pray he will lead us and guide us in the days ahead.

Words written by Albert Osborn, a general of The Salvation Army say

Blessed Lord to see you truly then to tell as I have seen,
This shall rule my life supremely; this shall be the sacred gleam.
Sealed again is all the sealing, Pledged again my willing heart,
First to know thee, then to serve thee, then to see thee as thou art.

In the secret of thy presence, in the hiding of thy power,
Let me love thee, let me serve thee, every consecrated hour.

And finally words from Micah 6:8 (NIV)

‘And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.’

God bless



Loving God, what we desire is this;
that people see not us, but through our smile,
greeting, helping hand or helpful word,
your love reach out and touch,
maybe at a time of need.
Keep us focussed through this day on being
your servants in this place, or wherever you
might take us, and may your name be
glorified.