

John 20: 19-20 'Peace be with you'

Jesus came to a home of fear and worry. And he offered peace. He turned the disciples understanding of a situation completely on its head. Think about their before and after feelings. Fear turned to joy. How might that apply to you today? Offer Jesus your feelings and concerns at the moment. Pray for joy.

Acts 10: 9-48 Peter and Cornelius 'I was in my house praying'

Many things happened because 2 men were praying in this story. What answers to prayer have you seen? How do you deal with prayers that seem to drop off God's radar? Peter and Cornelius both learned a great deal from their meeting. Read through this chapter slowly and ask God to show you anything he wants you to notice that may be helpful to you today.

Acts 16:25-34 'Filled with joy' Paul, Silas and the jailer

Can you remember a time when your faith first came alive, or you experienced a special moment of spiritual awareness? This story is pretty dramatic but the end result was the conversion of the jailer and his family. They were filled with joy. How might joy come to your home? What might it look like?

Acts 28: 30-31 'Welcome' Paul in Rome

We often imagine Paul jumping from one adventure to another. But he spent a lot of time in one place including in various prisons. Here we hear about how he spent 2 years in a rented house in Rome. He welcomed people and preached the gospel. What is the one thing you would like people to know about Jesus today? Can you put it into words? Give thanks for what he means to you.

Hebrews 3: 1-6 'Every house is built by someone'

There are a lot of hidden people in our lives – spend some time thinking who they might be and pray for them. People who we don't even consider but rely on daily or weekly. Those who 'build' all that we depend on. What about God – how hidden is he in your life? Can you see him as the builder of everything? How can we be 'his house?'

1 Peter 2: 4-5 'A spiritual house'

You are a living stone being built into a spiritual house. This is a word for the church. We need each other as God's family, the church. What do the phrases in this passage mean to you? Are they too far removed from your way of thinking? Ponder the fact that God lives in you by his Holy Spirit. He makes his home in you and me! How awesome is that!! Be encouraged today that God thinks you are worthy of his presence.

Lockdown Countdown

Here are 27 Bible verses and stories which feature a house of some kind. Some are well known stories, others are a few verses to ponder. There is one for each day of lockdown and you can use them in any order you like – at random or as written. Think ponder, pray. I've given a few notes which may help. What other stories which take place in houses might you want to add?

Genesis 28:1-17 'This is the house of God' Jacob's ladder

Jacob was actually asleep outside in this story not in a house – but he called the place the house of God after his dream. Are you having strange dreams during this pandemic? Do you find God speaks to you through dreams sometimes? Can your home be a 'house of God'? In what ways?

Genesis 39: 1-6 'The blessing of the Lord was on everything...' Joseph

Joseph lived in number of different places during his life. Here he is in the home of Potiphar. God blessed the household because of Joseph. How do you see God's blessings in your home? Perhaps your family (household) is dispersed at the moment. Pray God will bless them.

Exodus 12: 21-28 'Blood on the door' The Passover

This story is about God's protection. What might your house/home need protection against? Fear, anxiety, complacency..... Do you have anything on display to remind you of your faith eg a cross? Spend some time looking at that and ask God for protection.

Joshua 24: 14-15 'As for me and my house...'

Which god or gods do you serve? They can take many forms. How can we be more like Joshua and try to serve God our Lord?

Joshua 2: 1-21 A house of protection.. Rahab and the spies

This is a great story of using a home as a refuge for people in trouble. Rahab was rewarded for her courage in being willing to risk her life to help others. Who do you know who is risking their life for others at the moment? Take time to pray for them.

2 Samuel 11: 2-5 Home – a place of temptation

This story shows we don't have to go far to be tempted. David was on the roof of his house. What temptations might there be for you during lockdown which you want to pray about? 'Lead us not into temptation...'

1 Kings 7 : 1-12 Building a palace

Solomon built the Temple for God but he also built a palace for himself and his household. As you read the descriptions think about your own home and how it is built. Give thanks for the skills of those who built it, those who produced all the parts, and its contents.

2 Kings 4: 1-7 'What do you have in your house?' Elisha & the widow's oil

This story is about God's provision. What do you have in your house that God can use for your own or your family's needs? What about helping the needs of others? Are you or do you know others struggling financially. Can you pray in trust about the situation? Pray for our country at this time, for businesses and the government.

Ps 127 'unless the Lord builds the house...'

This Psalm goes on to say 'unless the Lord watches over the city'. Pray for God to watch over our towns and cities, our country, other places in the world on your heart. To build us up, to be the builder behind decisions and plans. It's enough to name places and be still with God. 'Your will be done..'

Proverbs 24: 3,4 By wisdom a house is built

What do words like wisdom, understanding and knowledge make you think of? The imagery of these verses is of a house and its contents. But what do you think the house represents? How might you increase in wisdom and understanding of God? Can you use this time to do that?

Eccl 7: 4 'house of mourning'

This is a difficult verse to get to grips with. What do the phrases 'house of mourning' and 'house of pleasure' mean to you? This is a time for many to mourn. How can we stand alongside them? We all have things to mourn this year – losses of many kinds. How can we see them wisely? How can we look ahead with hope?

Lamentations 2: 11-12 'in the streets'

Think of those without a home - refugees, those suffering from terrorist attacks and acts of nature. Who do you weep for today? How can we support those in need? Do you know mothers who are struggling? Can you help practically, can you become better informed about people in need in your community or more widely?

Haggai 1: 2-11 'you in your panelled houses...'

Do you have an attitude of gratitude? God is angry with his people because they never seem to have enough, always wanting more. 'Give careful thought to your ways'. We live in a culture which always seems to offer more, creates dissatisfaction. How can we resist and remember to put God first and not keep him 'in a ruin'?

Matt 2: 9-12 'On coming to the house'

This very well known story is probably too familiar to us. But why not try to read it with fresh eyes? Is there anything which strikes you, or speaks to you in a new way? Can you put yourself in their place and use your imagination to ponder your own reaction and response? What treasures do you have to offer Jesus today?

Matt 7: 24-27 'built his house on the rock'

What is Jesus likening these builders to? How good are you at listening to God's word? Do you skim read the bible without spending time on it? (Don't feel guilty, we all do at times!). What might this story prompt you to do? How do you put it into practice? Is there something you have read or heard recently that God is prompting you to follow up?

Matt 24: 42-44 'keep watch'

How do we keep watch for something which we have no date or time for? How do we 'watch over' our homes, our families, our lives so that we are ready for Jesus? Is this a moment to 'take stock' of your relationship with him? We currently have the fear of serious illness and death hanging over us and those we love. How might we become better prepared to deal with those fears?

Mark 1: 29-34 'The whole town gathered at the door'

At a time when we cannot have visitors this story may feel a bit uncomfortable. But think about Jesus and what it must have been like for him to be followed everywhere, with constant demands. He needed to find times of solitude and rest. You may have demands of work or family or other things from which you need a break. Schedule in a bit of time today to be still with God.

Mark 6: 7-13 'Whenever you enter a house stay there'

Jesus sent out people to preach and heal. We may not be able to go out so much but how can we be witnesses at this time? What do you think verse 11 means? Pray God will show you what or who he is calling you to bring his love to. He will also give you the 'how' if you ask.

Luke 19: 1-10 'I must stay at your house today...' Zaccheus

Another well know story. Imagine Jesus is in your house. Where would you sit him, what would you do? Make him a cup of tea? But isn't he already in your house? Ponder that today – what response does it arouse?

John 11: 1-44 'Lord if you had been here'. Raising of Lazarus

Many people must be asking 'where is God' at the moment. 'If only he had been here..'. This story makes us think about God's timing. Look through and think about how Jesus acted at the different points. His humanity gave him compassion to weep, but he approached the situation as Lord. How might that help you to see this situation our whole world is in at the moment?

John 12: 1-8 'The house was filled with fragrance'

What fragrance is your house filled with? Mary did something beautiful and extravagant for Jesus. What small simple thing could you do today for him? What fragrance might he appreciate in your home?