

TFD#65 21st July 2021 “The Pingdemic”

Thanks Mark for the intro, and great to be with you again. According to latest data on the BBC website¹, more than a million people in the UK have been asked to isolate in recent days.

It's not surprising. We are in a strange and unnerving time where the restrictions have rapidly decreased and the Covid cases have rapidly increased. So while we give thanks for the rollout of the vaccines which has cut down the number of hospitalisations, so much of the virus is going around that many people have either got it without knowing it, or come in contact with someone who has.

Some have called it a “pingdemic”, as the track and trace app has pinged thousands of people telling them to stay at home away from work and friends due to their contact with others. Indeed it's got so bad that some supermarkets and pubs have had to close again because so many of their staff have had to isolate.

Speaking of isolation, my brother in law's sister is due to go back to Australia in August, and on arrival she and other travellers from the UK will be escorted by police to

a hotel where she will be in ~~solitary confinement~~, I mean hotel isolation for 14 days.

I'm not sure whether 14 days in front of a telly or a book would be a dream or a nightmare. Sounds more like a punishment to me.

Do you know that Jesus Christ used to take himself away for a bit of isolation during his earthly ministry? He would take time out to be alone with his heavenly Father in prayer. Perhaps we could learn from that, that there's a kind of isolation that can be a good thing- just spending time away from the busyness to be with God.

But there was one time when Jesus was in a more serious kind of solitary c

onfinement, abandoned by his disciples, and even cut off from his heavenly Father. It was when he died on the cross. “My God my God, why have you forsaken me?” In an extraordinary exchange, he entered separation from God, the ultimate isolation, so that we wouldn't have to. He was excluded to take our place so that we might be included. We must make sure we turn to Jesus for this inclusion so that we aren't ultimately socially distanced from God.

Followed by “All by myself” by Celine Dion.

¹ BBC website [here](#)