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## Lockdown

During this strange time we are all supposed to stay at home and not to go out and meet others so that none of us catch or spread coronavirus, sometimes called COVID-19. The secular press cannot handle ideas of death and the purpose of lockdown is not to cure us at all, but to reduce the spread so that our health service can cope with it.

This is not the first time in history that such an event has happened. Yet the secular world around us wants to avoid illness at all cost. This is unrealistic because death is a fact of life. Daniel Defoe was believed to be the first to come up with the truth that:

*'Nothing is certain but death and taxes'*

Daniel Defoe wrote this in his work, "*The Political History of the Devil*", written in 1726.

To any Christian there is life after death and it matters completely what we do here to be saved. We must believe in our Lord Jesus Christ as our Saviour. That is it: There are no hidden conditions involved. Simply believe in Jesus Christ as your Saviour.

Just before Easter week, the Rev Josh Maynard, over at Angle in Pembrokeshire, spoke on Facebook about Eyam in Derbyshire and this piece is inspired by the talk.



*This painting of the Black death is called Historia de ihreja and is from the 17<sup>th</sup> Century.*

Eyam is famous for having isolated itself, in 1665 and 1666, the entire village in Derbyshire, when the Black death, the plague came to the village.

The plague had come with some cloth from London, yet the response of the village was to isolate themselves completely and take the risk to their lives entirely upon themselves in an effort to save the lives of others in all the surrounding area.

You can still visit the village today where records are kept.

A plague cross was put at the boundary of the village and nobody was allowed in and nobody was allowed out. This was total **Lockdown**. So Lockdown is not a modern idea at all.

We do not know exactly what the cross looked like but it was believed to be made in the same style as this one in the Churchyard in Eyam today:



The cross contained a recess in its base, or foot, in which vinegar could be kept. The vinegar was there to sterilise any coins left in it. It was almost certainly wine vinegar (which was common at the time) and what remained of the alcohol acted as a steriliser.

Whenever someone in the village needed something then they could have it brought to the foot of the cross and leave money for it in this little vinegar filled recess. The person bringing that item, and then meeting the need, would then be paid for their kindness.

The transaction then took place at the foot of this cross that had been built on the boundary to the village.

The cross became the important reminder for the whole village.

Two clergymen stayed with the villagers and risked their lives and those of their families. The Rev William Montpesson and the Puritan minister Thomas Stanley. They both worked together to care for the village. The risk they were taking to stay in the village was very real and so some of their family did die there. For example, at the beginning of the plague William's wife, Catherine, wanted the whole family to leave Eyam. William tried to persuade her to leave the village with the children so that he could stay to help the villagers without worrying about his family. Catherine refused to go and stayed to help her husband. It is believed that later on Catherine herself died of the plague.

It was the Minister Thomas Stanley who took the decision to go into lockdown and was supported by William Montpesson.



They moved the cross to the boundary of the village. It is believed that at that time, the graves in the Churchyard used the saving image of the cross, as seen here in an example:

The cross was the point at which people in the village could get everything they needed without have to meet anyone and spread the disease.

It was at the foot of the cross that they could have their needs met and leave the money in the vinegar.

The transaction took place at the foot of the cross. It was at the cross that people doing the loving, saving transaction were kept safe. It was the power of the cross lived out in their lives.

Everything needed was provided at the foot of the cross. Death itself was conquered at the cross. The cross was essential for everyone there. It was the heart of their lives in that village.

*We are reminded of the true significance of our Lord Jesus Christ's loving care for all of us when he gave his life on the cross in the famous painting by Salvador Dali:*

As we are reminded by St Peter in 1 Peter chapter 3:

*<sup>18</sup> For Christ also suffered for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, in order to bring you to God. He was put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit ....*

and as we are reminded in St Paul's first letter to the Church in Corinth in Greece. We read in 1 Corinthians chapter 1:

*<sup>18</sup> For the message about the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.*

In St Paul's letter to the Colossians we are told how God reconciles us all and has mercy on us all through the cross. It says:

*<sup>20</sup> and through him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross.*

As it says in the first letter of John, we read in 1 John chapter 2:

*<sup>2</sup> ....and he is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.*

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