**Sunday 26th April**

2 Cor. 12: 9, 10

But he said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.’ Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ’s power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ’s sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

There are lots of paradoxes in the life of following Jesus. Like, what you give away grows and multiplies; laying down your life is the key to knowing life in all its fullness; being a servant is the way to greatness. Here Paul is writing about one of those paradoxes: ‘when I am weak, then I am strong’. What can he mean? That is so countercultural, in a society that tends to value the strong, the powerful, the ones who seem to have it altogether all the time and where independence is a highly revered quality. But Paul has discovered the secret of F.R.O.G.! Fully Relying On God! We were designed to live in total dependence on God, and it is when we live that way that we discover true strength. If we think that we have it all sorted, then we are unlikely to come humbly before God. But if we recognise that without Him we can do nothing, and come to Him, then all of the resources and power of heaven are available to us. At a time when many of us are recognising our weakness, let’s call on the Name of the Lord, and see his power made perfect in weakness. And when lockdown is lifted, let’s not leave this lesson behind, but carry it into all that the future holds.

*Father, as we come before you today, we recognise our need of you. Please forgive us for the times when we have been self-sufficient and lived without regard for you. We receive your forgiveness and ask for you grace to flood our lives today. Thank you for your great love, and for your mighty power which is ‘able to bring joy out of grief and light out of darkness’. We fully rely on you today.*

*Lord, as we hold our nation before you today, we thank you for the wisdom and skill that you have given to people, and for the wonderful ways in which those things are applied to bring healing and help. But we know that we need you. We pray that you will turn the hearts of our nation back to you, that you will bring an end to this virus, and that you will heal and comfort the sick and bereaved. Thank you that you are the God who is able to do immeasurably more than all we can ask or imagine. In Jesus name. Amen*