

## The importance of a breeze

This hot weather is amazing. The hottest summer since 1976. Maybe the hottest recorded temperature ever. I think it is lovely ... but not everyone agrees with me. A friend said to me, "I can't come out because of this awful weather." I've only ever heard that said about rain and snow before.



One of the things that I find quite surprising is how quickly we get used to the higher temperatures. I have heard someone say, "Oh it's a bit cooler today. It's only 28." I would never have thought that here in England we would describe 28 degrees as cool. But actually after 31 degrees 28 does feel quite comfortable. Strange.

So what determines whether you think the weather is amazing, lovely, awful or cool? I suppose it could depend on what we are used to. But I think it is more likely to do with how we are able to cope. If we feel hot and bothered and unable to cool down it's awful. If we're on the beach and able to have a refreshing dip in the sea, it's amazing. If we're stuck in an office with no air-conditioning and no open windows it's stifling. If we're driving along in a convertible it's beautiful.

What if we're sat in a church listening to a sermon? Well that depends.

I think the problem isn't so much the heat, it's the lack of air. Or rather lack of fresh air. When the air is warm, still and stale it is so hard to cope. It's hard to concentrate. It's hard to stay awake. But when there's a breeze....

Sometimes life throws at us trials and difficulties far worse than the extremes of weather. How do we cope? We need a breeze.

Prayer is like a breeze. It can refresh and inspire. It can revitalise and give hope. It can make the difference between wilting or surviving.

But even more important than prayer is the presence of God. Meshach, Shadrach and Abednego were thrown into a furnace seven times hotter than usual. The presence of one, "like unto the Son of Man", made the difference. The trial was not only bearable it became a blessing. It changed from awful to amazing! So in our lives today, whatever the weather and whatever our circumstances, make sure we rely on prayer and rejoice in the presence of God.

Pastor Chris Ricketts