

PSALMS OF HOPE

@UnitedChurchFerndown

United Church Ferndown's 2023 Lent Programme

Monday 28th February

Reflection #7

We live to serve



Pray:

Lord, let everything I do in this season of Lent come from You, be inspired by You. I long to be closer to You. I long to receive the hope that You offer. Help me to remember that nothing is more important than You in my life. Help me to rely on You for help. I want to walk in your footsteps, Jesus. I confess that I have often felt I knew better and ignored Your presence. Heal me, Lord, and help me to find You in the darkness of my life. Let me reach out and feel your hand and love there to guide me. Speak to me in this moment, Lord God. **Amen.**

Introduction:

I was being considered for Baptist ministry by my local Baptist church, I had preached at many churches plenty of times and at my own church. The deacons of the church had me attend one of their meetings to ask me questions and the members' meeting was coming up when they were to vote on whether I was called or not. The minister then invited Melanie and me to the manse for an evening meal. We sat in the dining room for this yummy home-cooked meal. It was the dinner conversation that surprised me however! My minister told me some of the horror stories from his many years of service as a BU minister. There were no holds barred – sadly, he spoke of bullying, financial hardship, stress, unrealistic expectations and loneliness. He looked us in the eye at the end of these stories and said to us 'If you can do anything else, do that!' Wow, I thought as we walked home that night but what else could I do? God had called me – who was I to say no? Sadly, my minister was right and wrong. We have faced all of the things that he said we would face and more but we have also seen glimpses of heaven. God gives us a choice. We can say yes or no but I find the dramatic stuff, the best stuff, happens when we say yes to God...



Read:

Psalm 123:1-2 (MSG)

I look to you, heaven-dwelling God,
look up to you for help.

Like servants, alert to their master's commands,
like a maiden attending her lady,
We're watching and waiting, holding our breath,
awaiting your word of mercy.

Psalm 56:3-4 (NIV)

³When I am afraid, I put my trust in you.

⁴In God, whose word I praise—
in God I trust and am not afraid.

What can mere mortals do to me?

Consider:

Ignatius was an early church leader (the Bishop of Antioch) who wrote profoundly about God, his creation, and how to hear him. Ignatius' favourite teaching theme was 'What more does God want now?'

God calls. We respond. It is the fundamental dynamic of the spiritual life. God is active in each of us personally. We should, according to Saint Ignatius, aim to have 'the light and love of God inflame all possible decisions and resolutions about life situations'. God is an active God. He is ever at work in people's lives, inviting, directing, guiding, proposing, suggesting. This understanding of God animates all those who follow Jesus. Our response to God occurs now. We are not to be inhibited by our own weakness and failure. We are not to ponder our unworthiness. God is working in our lives now and we are to respond now. Each one of us is loved by God and he is asking us in these Psalms, how are we going to express our love for God? You are called now! We are all called now... What has God called you to be or do?

Pray:

Thank God for his love! Tell him how much you love him. Thank God for your calling to serve him. Pray for all those you know who are serving God locally and internationally.

Try it out:

Look for Jesus today! In all of your activity, in all that you are doing, try to see God at work and if you can't... ask him to be part of that moment – invite him in!

Darren