

# PSALMS OF HOPE

@UnitedChurchFerndown

United Church Ferndown's 2023 Lent Programme

Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> March

Reflection #30

**What would GOD have us say?**



**Pray:**

My Lord: thank you for the daily journey you are taking me on. Thank you that you and you alone guide my footsteps. You go before me, you are ever with me, your hands steer me and you always lead me on the right paths. As I commit each day to you, I know Lord that you will always direct me, inspire me, teach me and discipline me. How can I but praise you for this journey that you are taking me on, in the full knowledge that your loving arms are with me for the entirety of the adventure. By your strength Lord, help me today, and always, to give ALL praise glory and honour to your holy name. **Amen.**

## Introduction:

An old man spread rumours that his neighbour was a thief. As a result, the young man was arrested. Days later, the young man was proven innocent. After being released, he sued the old man for wrongly accusing him. In the court, the old man told the judge: 'They were just comments, didn't harm anyone.' The judge told the old man: 'Write all the things you said about him on a piece of paper. Cut them up and on the way home, throw the pieces of paper out. Tomorrow, come back to hear the sentence.'

Next day, the judge told the old man: 'Before receiving the sentence, you will have to go out and gather all the pieces of paper that you threw out yesterday.' The old man said: 'I can't do that! The wind spread them and I won't know where to find them.' The judge then replied: 'The same way, simple comments may destroy the honour of a man to such an extent that one is not able to fix it. If you can't speak well of someone, rather don't say anything.'



## Read: Psalm 141 (NIV)

- <sup>1</sup> I call to you, Lord, come quickly to me;  
hear me when I call to you.
- <sup>2</sup> May my prayer be set before you like incense;  
may the lifting up of my hands be like the evening sacrifice.
- <sup>3</sup> Set a guard over my mouth, Lord;  
keep watch over the door of my lips.
- <sup>4</sup> Do not let my heart be drawn to what is evil  
so that I take part in wicked deeds  
along with those who are evildoers;  
do not let me eat their delicacies.
- <sup>5</sup> Let a righteous man strike me – that is a kindness;  
let him rebuke me – that is oil on my head.  
My head will not refuse it,  
for my prayer will still be against the deeds of evildoers.
- <sup>6</sup> Their rulers will be thrown down from the cliffs,  
and the wicked will learn that my words were well spoken.
- <sup>7</sup> They will say, 'As one ploughs and breaks up the earth,  
so our bones have been scattered at the mouth of the grave.'
- <sup>8</sup> But my eyes are fixed on you, Sovereign Lord;  
in you I take refuge – do not give me over to death.
- <sup>9</sup> Keep me safe from the traps set by evildoers,  
from the snares they have laid for me.
- <sup>10</sup> Let the wicked fall into their own nets,  
while I pass by in safety.

## Consider:

We've all had occasions when we've said things we've regretted. Unfortunately, words have a habit of slipping out at the worst times, usually when we're in a heated argument, or tired. Once out, they can never be retrieved. Like a fire that destroys a forest, it can set our own world on fire (James 3:5-6).

But Psalm 141:3 offers a simple, but powerful prayer – one worth committing to memory. As the saying goes, an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. And what could be better than having the One who knows us best standing guard over the thing that can so easily get us into hot water? Your thoughts? What disciplines do you practise to guard your tongue?

## Pray:

Pray for better self-control. It is part of the fruit of the Spirit.

## Try it out:

Before you speak, think not just about what you are saying but also about how it might be heard.