

PSALMS OF HOPE

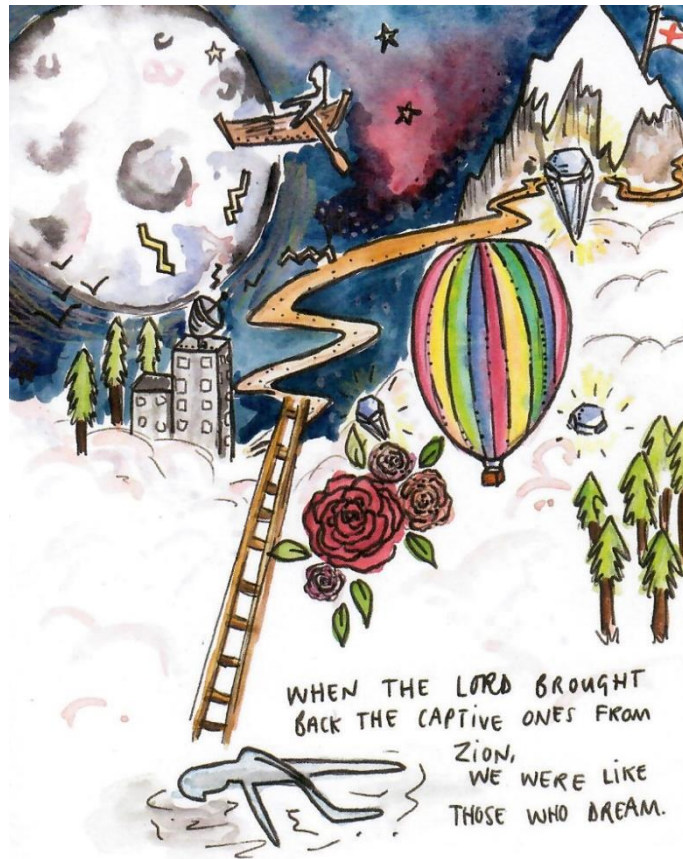
@UnitedChurchFerndown

United Church Ferndown's 2023 Lent Programme

Monday 27th March

Reflection #34

TOMORROW WILL BE A GOOD DAY



WHEN THE LORD BROUGHT
BACK THE CAPTIVE ONES FROM
ZION,
WE WERE LIKE
THOSE WHO DREAM.

Amok 126 19/9/15



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:

There is a lot to be gained through academic study in whatever stage of life you are in. Taking exams shouldn't just be the privilege of the young. We should all experience the wonder of new learning and we certainly shouldn't let our brains stagnate once we have supposedly ended formal 'education.' The time of Lent can be a great chance to take up a new subject and delve into it each day with a conviction that you are at least going to get to the end of the first lesson. It doesn't have to be Applied Mathematics or Nuclear Fusion but could be basic Flemish or the delightful cuisines of Eastern Turkey. By enlivening your senses, inspiring your mind, renewing your passion for creativity, God will quite possibly lead you to new paths and new experiences which you never thought were possible. These in turn could bring a newfound happiness and joy that may entice others to follow in your footsteps.

**Read:****Psalm 126 verses 5-6 (NIV)**

Those who sow with tears
will reap with songs of joy.
⁶ Those who go out weeping,
carrying seed to sow,
will return with songs of joy,
carrying sheaves with them.

Consider:

Sowing a seed is not the sole preserve of the gardener. Musicians, mathematicians, make-up artists and manicurists can provide inspiration to their clients, especially as they may be working with a captive audience. Seventeenth century Bible commentator Matthew Henry believes today's psalm may have been written by Ezra, the former Jewish leader, reflecting on the nation's freedom from Babylonian captivity. It is part of the cluster of psalms which are called 'Songs of Ascents', sung by worshippers or singers with hearts of joy and redemption.

Lent is not always seen as a time of thanksgiving, praise, worship and joy. Yet if we are to demonstrate to others the outcome of our faith and the hope we profess, surely our countenance should be one which attracts others to us.

As someone who spends inordinate amounts of my working life with primary school pupils, I realise that these moments are precious. How we address someone today, how we greet a colleague, what we say and how we respond is absolutely vital. The impression we leave on the handful of lives we influence is so critical. Daily we need to ask God for his grace to be sufficient. Then, as we sow our own seeds of wisdom and truth, those listening to us may be attracted to our message; they too, given time, will likewise return with their own songs of joy.

Pray:

Pray that as you live out your lives today, that God will impute a strong sense of his joy in everything you do. It's remarkably contagious and can have life-changing consequences.

Try it out:

Thankfulness is a wonderful character trait. Whatever, or whoever, you have to be thankful for, consciously praise God for this. Then, contact someone who is on your 'thankfulness' list with a call, a card, a WhatsApp or DM. It could then make them as thankful as you.