

PSALMS OF HOPE

@UnitedChurchFerndown

United Church Ferndown's 2023 Lent Programme

Wednesday 29th March

Reflection #36

BRING PEACE TO OUR LAND.

Make us STRONG again,
and we, your people,
will praise you.



lmsk*85 9/8/15



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:

Lent is a season of waiting and that seems to be something with which the Psalmist can identify. I'm pretty sure it's something that most of us can identify with as well, as we wait for a vaccination, for our workplaces to become safe or at least safer, for the opportunity to see friends and family again, and for some semblance of normality to return to our lives. It has been a hard year for everyone and for some it has been beyond hard. So it doesn't feel like a moment for glib statements or facile conclusions. But like the Psalmist – who points out to God that he has restored Israel in the past – despite the grief and exhaustion (and, in my case, slightly less seriously, the sheer monotony of back-to-back online meetings) I feel a sense of hope that we will soon enjoy greater freedom again and that we will be together with family and friends this summer. But sometimes it feels like a long wait...



Read:

Psalm 85:1-7 (NIV)

- ¹ You, Lord, showed favour to your land;
you restored the fortunes of Jacob.
- ² You forgave the iniquity of your people
and covered all their sins.^[b]
- ³ You set aside all your wrath
and turned from your fierce anger.
- ⁴ Restore us again, God our Saviour,
and put away your displeasure towards us.
- ⁵ Will you be angry with us for ever?
Will you prolong your anger through all generations?
- ⁶ Will you not revive us again,
that your people may rejoice in you?
- ⁷ Show us your unfailing love, Lord,
and grant us your salvation.

Consider:

In the lead-up to Easter, we're reminded as Christians that we are waiting for something even bigger than the end of lockdown. In Christ's death and resurrection, we see the promise of God's transformation of us, of the communities we live in, and of the world. As we come slowly out of lockdown, what is it that we want to leave behind us? And what do we want to do more of, with the new freedom that we've been given, to be part of God's transformation programme? In my case, lockdown has taught me that I need to be a better listener. What is it for you?

Pray:

Lord, as we emerge from lockdown, back into a more normal rhythm of life, show us how we can be part of your work to bring peace and prosperity to our communities, and to work with you as you grow the kingdom of God here and now.

Try it out:

Look out of your window, or, if you are able, take a walk. Tell God what you would like to see happen in the streets and parks of your neighbourhood, and listen to what he says.