

PSALMS OF HOPE

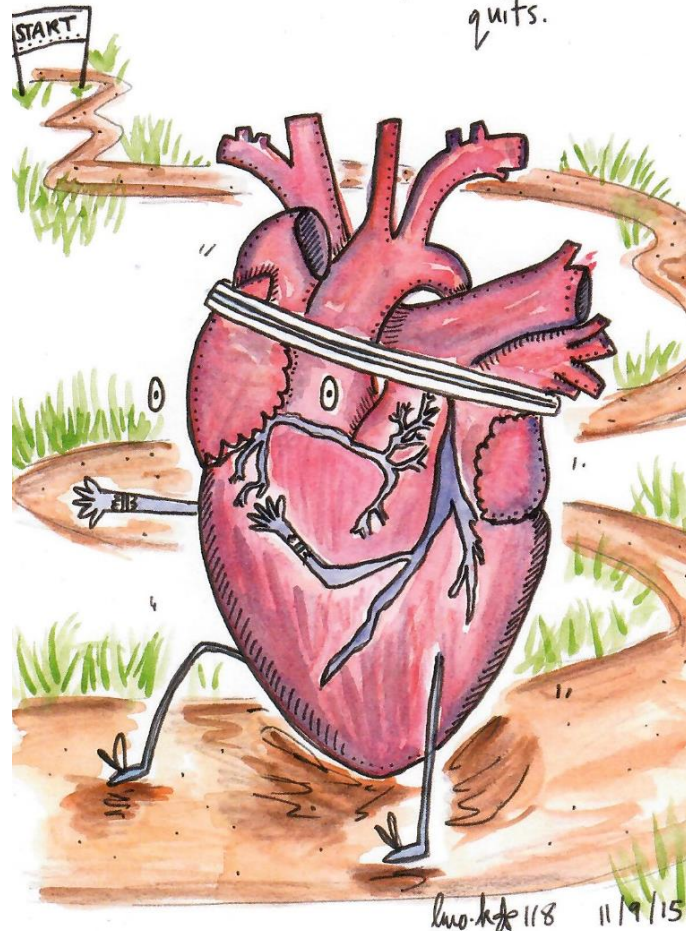
United Church Ferndown's 2023 Lent Programme

Saturday 18th March

Reflection #39

THE EASTER PSALM

His love never
quits.



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:

In 2008, a Starbucks barista (server), 51-year-old Sandie Andersen, donated a kidney to a regular, long-standing customer in order to save her life. 55-year-old Annamarie Ausnes stated during a talk with Andersen that she needed a kidney transplant. The only problem was that her husband and son were not matches, meaning that they could not donate their kidneys to her.

Without hesitation, Andersen offered to have a blood test to see if she matched the customer. She ended up being a perfect match! Andersen donated her kidney, and in a few weeks the customer was expected to be 100% back to normal. WOW! This is special! This is love! That's nothing but pure love! Amazing! God bless that barista! Real love puts self last.



Read: Psalm 118:14-24 (NIV)

The LORD is my strength and my defence;
he has become my salvation.
¹⁵ Shouts of joy and victory
resound in the tents of the righteous:
'The LORD's right hand has done mighty things!
¹⁶ The LORD's right hand is lifted high;
the LORD's right hand has done mighty things!'
¹⁷ I will not die but live,
and will proclaim what the LORD has done.
¹⁸ The LORD has chastened me severely,
but he has not given me over to death.
¹⁹ Open for me the gates of the righteous;
I will enter and give thanks to the LORD.
²⁰ This is the gate of the LORD
through which the righteous may enter.
²¹ I will give you thanks, for you answered me;
you have become my salvation.
²² The stone the builders rejected
has become the cornerstone;
²³ the LORD has done this,
and it is marvellous in our eyes.
²⁴ The LORD has done it this very day;
let us rejoice today and be glad.

Consider:

This has to be one of the most Christian psalms in the Old Testament. Jesus used v22 in the parable of the vineyard (Matthew 21:42), Peter used it to defend the apostles' work before the Sanhedrin in Acts 4:7 and used it to speak of the church in 1 Peter 2:4-10. The rejection of the 'stone' for Jesus and the apostles was the rejection of Jesus by the Pharisees. Yet it was the Lord's doing to lift up for his glory what the world rejected. The world rejected Jesus by crucifying him and leaving him in that tomb. Yet, God made him the cornerstone by lifting him up to build his church. 'This is the day that the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad it in' (Psalm 118:24). No wonder the early church fathers used this text for numerous Easter sermons!

Pray:

Pray for those who don't know the sacrificial love of God.

The End (ish):

Our 'Psalms of Hope' programme ends here but tomorrow is Palm Sunday, which is the beginning of Holy Week. Nearly half of the Gospels were written about the week that we remember next. We have some great short reflections organised via Zoom, a Zoom communion on Maundy Thursday, a Good Friday service coming via YouTube and our Easter Sunday Celebration, and we would love to see you there if you are online. Check out the church website and emails for the links.

Darren