

Daily reflections and prayers 20th-27th April

(Based on the Common Worship Lectionary)

The book of Colossians which we look at this week contains incredible truths about who Jesus is and what God has done for us through Christ. God, says Paul, has revealed everything in Jesus Christ, and that Christ and Christ alone is the heart of the gospel message. The letter is written in part at least to encourage the Christians in Colossae and neighbouring churches to “not stand still” in their faith but to move on both as individuals and as a community and to grow in faith and discipleship.

This is a message for all of us, as we are together but apart, to reflect on what it looks like for us now to grow in faith and discipleship in the middle of this crisis.

Monday 20th April

- Psalm 1
- Colossians 1:1-14

Opening Prayer:

Loving God, as I read your word, speak to me I pray and lead me into your truth.

In Jesus' name. Amen.

Reflection:

The theme of growth and fruitfulness is in both passages . God's word says the psalm is life giving. I don't know about you but I sometimes feel like I'm planted too far from the life giving streams , and as if my leaves are withering. Reading God's word is not always easy, but it is effective and the beginning of Colossians assures us that God, through Jesus in our lives makes a difference. As we respond to the gospel , God's grace changes us and we begin to grow and bear fruit together with Christians all over the world .

A prayer:

Loving Father, thank you for your word, and that through it we can learn more about you the God who in Jesus transforms us and helps us to grow more like you each day.

Prayer Focus:

- Pray for yourself and for those you know and love
- Pray for all the scientists across the world working to find treatments and vaccines to curb and stop the spreads of this virus
- Pray for all those who are most affected by the lockdown

Tuesday 21st April

- Psalm 8
- Colossians 1:15-end

Opening Prayer:

Loving God, as I read your word, speak to me I pray and help me to see you more clearly

In Jesus' name. Amen.

Reflection:

When we consider God's greatness and glory in and through creation it can sometimes feel as if we are too insignificant to be considered by Him; but amazingly God wants us to partner with Him in caring for creation; and his glory and majesty involves his commitment to humanity, to us . Colossians shows us that this majestic God is seen clearly in Jesus.

"The One who is the visible image of the invisible God;the One in whom all the fullness of the Godhead dwells;the One who is the living residence of the Trinity;the One in whom eternity lives, breathes, and has its being; the One who is before time;..... the One who is supreme in every realm and holds the first place in all things –the Son of the Father's love; the One whose significance is unmatched in human history; the One who holds the title deed to the universe this glorious, limitless, amazing, incredible, expansive, incomparable, marvellous, stunning, staggering, majestic, mighty, matchless, spectacular, outstanding, tremendous, immense, infinite, vast, grand, triumphant, victorious, precious radiant, peerless, wonderful, magnificent Christhas chosen to place all his fullness...where? inside of you...and not only does Christ live in you, but more importantly: you are able to live by His life...you are made utterly, totally, and fully complete in Him...here and now. He is more than enough." (adapted from Jesus Manifesto by Leonard Sweet & Frank Viola. <http://www.thejesusmanifesto.com/> Posted on Servant 923. <http://servant923.com/tag/frank-viola/>)

A prayer:

Loving Father, Lord God,words are not enough to express Your awesomeness, majesty and holiness

Our highest expressions of worship are limited next your creation, Your very self.

Make us aware, through Your Holy Spirit,that You are here among us.

Prayer Focus:

- Firstly, pray for your own needs and for your loved ones.
- Pray for all those who are volunteering to support others in a wide range of ways locally , nationally and throughout the world

Wednesday 22 April

- Psalm 16
- Colossians 2:1-7

Opening Prayer:

Loving God, as I read your word, speak to me I pray and lead me into your truth.

In Jesus' name. Amen.

Reflection:

Psalm 16 is something of a family psalm for me, my parents had it at their wedding as did we, and we had it read at my dad's funeral. V 11 summarises its message in the middle of ever-changing scenes: 'You make known to me the path of life and in your presence there is fullness of joy'; and that message is re-emphasized in the passage in Colossians 2. Paul's prayer for the church is that they may know Christ in whom all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are held and because of that will be encouraged in heart and united in love even though he is not with them. So today as we are apart from each other physically lets remember that in Christ and by His spirit we are united, and live in that reality

A prayer:

Loving Father, in these changing times when so many things we have relied in we can't take for granted we thank you that you make known a path to life and that although apart we can be united in Him.

Prayer Focus:

- Firstly, pray for your own needs and for your loved ones.
- But today, let's pray also for those who are struggling with isolation. May God reassure them with the reality of his presence.
- For wisdom for our leaders as we enter a fifth week of lockdown as they plan for a safe way to end it

Thursday 23rd

- Psalm 26
- Colossians 2:8-19

Opening Prayer:

Loving God, as I read your word, speak to me I pray and lead me into your truth.

In Jesus' name. Amen.

Reflection:

On Psalm 26 David pours out his commitment to God; he's not afraid at that moment in time to declare that he places God as number one in his life, that he relies on Him as the foundation for his life. There is a confidence in this psalm which we don't see in all the time; Colossians reminds us that when we step into Christ and choose to follow him we are no longer defined by what we were and did in the past, but by Christ who makes us alive in Him and brings us, as the passage says to fullness of life . I think that means that however we are feeling at the moment, whatever we are most struggling with, even when feel as if God is at a distance from us we can nevertheless be confident that God is unchanging and will always be a foundation for our lives

A prayer:

Loving Father, we thank you for your love, help us to always depend not on what we can achieve but rather on what God has done for us through Jesus Christ.

Prayer Focus:

- Firstly, pray for your own needs and for your loved ones.
- But today, let us also pray for those working in hospitals, hospices and care homes; the, nurses and all other health care professionals. We pray for protection, stamina and continuing compassion
- Let's also pray for the managers, porters, cleaners and other support staff on whom the rely

Friday 24th

- Psalm 61
- Colossians 3:1-11

Opening Prayer:

Loving God, as I read your word, speak to me I pray and lead me into your truth.

In Jesus' name. Amen.

Reflection:

This psalm appeals to our emotions to call up images of security and protection. In time of trouble, David calls upon God as his protector: When David says, "Lead me to the rock" he implies that, even though our God is an impregnable fortress of protection, he must be 'accessed.' We must make our way to him in faith and acknowledge that he is that place of protection. When our hearts are troubled by sorrow, responsibilities, fear of the future, or as now the corona virus... we often turn to other things to protect us. God wants us to run to him and find in him all that he is for us. Col 3, encourages us to do the same, to set our minds and hearts on God. Following Christ is not an ideology or even set of beliefs alone, rather our faith should lead to action and a process of change on our lives empowered by God's holy spirit.

A prayer:

Loving Father, you want us to set our minds and hearts on you; in the midst of the current challenges help us to turn to you and seek your Spirit to help us grow in faith and love Amen

Prayer Focus:

- Firstly, pray for your own needs and for your loved ones.
- Let us pray for teachers, social workers, carers who all continue to provide care and support for some of the most vulnerable
- Let us pray for our neighbours who, like us, face further isolation. May God be with them, and may they draw closer to God at this time.

Saturday

- Psalm 27:1-5
- Colossians 3:12-17

Opening Prayer:

Loving God, as I read your word, speak to me I pray and lead me into your truth.

In Jesus' name. Amen.

Reflection:

The psalm starts with a cry for protection in the midst of unprecedented struggles; the psalmist feels besieged on every side. Much I imagine as many of us have been feeling at times, with so much of our world turned upside down and with emotions surging and dipping. The challenge we face in times like this especially is how we 'dress'. Colossians encourages us to put on compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.....and we have seen so much of this in communities so far; yet under pressure, in pain, in despair they are not always easy to demonstrate lets pray that we continue to be people who support each other, who love those in our households, who reach out to the lonely and display the love of Christ

A prayer:

Loving Father, help us to get up each day ready to be dressed in patience, kindness, compassion, gentleness and humility in all our dealings with others

Prayer Focus:

- Firstly, pray for your own needs and for your loved ones.
- Today, let us also pray for those who work in the food industries, the packers, the truckers, the shelf-stackers and the food servers.
- But let's also pray for the elderly who face a particular isolation.

Sunday 26th April Easter 2

- Psalm 23
- Luke 24:13-35

Opening Prayer:

Loving God, as I read your word, speak to me I pray and lead me into your truth.

In Jesus' name. Amen.

Reflection:

The theme that struck me in both readings was walking . Who knew that a simple walk and a meal could be so transformative; well, we probably all do now when these things have become a precious focus in days of lockdown . The two tired and confused disciples were on a seven mile walk to Emmaus when Jesus joins them. They're confused and battered by the celebration, conflict, violence, death, grief and signs of hope they have witnessed. Despite their surging emotions they are still willing to offer a stranger hospitality and in doing so encounter the living Jesus, and are energised to walk a further seven miles back to share the good news.

Psalm 23 and this story remind me that resurrection life calls us all to be on the move; journeying with God both in places of calm and rest and through valleys of darkness and grief; willing to encounter Jesus and his transformative power in anything including the simplicity of a walk and a meal....and to be called to new life in Him. Let's pray that we can walk with him daily now, in the midst of the unknown and the changed and the unfamiliar

A prayer:

Loving Father, thank you through Jesus you offer to be walking with us in the storms of life as well as the celebrations and thankyou that through His resurrection we catch a glimpse of hope which is eternally lasting

Prayer Focus:

- Firstly, pray for your own needs and for your loved ones.
- But today, let us also pray for those who are mourning loved ones today, for whatever reason. May God comfort them in their loss.
- Pray also for families who are struggling with kids who want to get out but can't, and who are juggling responsibilities for them as well as working from home. Also for those who are losing jobs and face the future with uncertainty