

Thought for the Day 09/04/2020

"So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand ... For I am the LORD your God who takes hold of your right hand and says to you, 'Do not fear; I will help you.'" (Isaiah 41:10,13)

For my daily exercise today (Wednesday) I took some time off from service planning and went for a walk up onto Lyth Hill and sat down to look at the view, and it was truly stunning: a cloudless blue sky, a peaceful pastoral scene of sheep grazing in the fields below and the magnificent south Shropshire hills spread out on the horizon. And as I looked at the view, it seemed for a moment that all was at peace and I even forgot about Covid-19 for a brief time! I was having what you might call a 'mountain top experience' where all was calm, and I felt the closeness of God with me. But what about the inevitable 'valley' experience that would come...when those feelings of calmness and serenity were overcome by a sense of sadness and unease that life was still far from 'normal' for all of us, that an unseen enemy is still making people ill and taking lives and all the untold other effects of a worldwide pandemic?

How we navigate between the two in our daily lives? How do we trust in the love and faithfulness of God when our human feelings are as fickle as the wind?

Isaiah the prophet says some powerful words about the nature and character of God that I would encourage you to dwell on today as we approach Good Friday. Imagine God's right hand gripping your right hand – taking hold of and upholding you, always – preventing you from falling, supporting you, raising you up, keeping you strong against all opposition. God's right hand is a righteous right hand, and He can therefore sustain you and defend you. This image evokes a sensation of strength, security, trust, and rest – with God's powerful and strong right hand gripping yours, you and I can know that God is with us in all things. **"... The LORD is the stronghold of my life – of whom shall I be afraid?"** (Psalm 27:1b)

I'm saying this to myself as much as anyone else: the next time you or I find ourselves in a difficult, fearful or lonely place, remember this image. Remember, believing and trusting, that God has not left us alone, that He will never leave us or abandon us. It will never be the strength of our grasp that will keep us – it will always be God's grip and hold on us that will keep each of us safe and secure. You and I can count on His faithful and righteous right hand to help and to strengthen us, always.

Remember you can send your prayer request to:

Prayer@baystonhillchurch.org

Or ring: (01743) 583215

And you can read these *Thought for the Day* articles on our website too at www.baystonhillchurch.org

Peace be with you!

Rev Peter Hubbard (Vicar)