



The Church of Scotland

Place for Pause

A WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHURCH AND COUNTRY
17th - 22nd August 2020

TUESDAY 18TH AUGUST • TO LAMENT AND TO HOPE

Reading - Lamentations 3:1-24

I am the one who has seen the afflictions that come from the rod of the Lord 's anger. He has led me into darkness, shutting out all light. He has turned his hand against me again and again, all day long. He has made my skin and flesh grow old. He has broken my bones. He has besieged and surrounded me with anguish and distress. He has buried me in a dark place, like those long dead. He has walled me in, and I cannot escape. He has bound me in heavy chains. And though I cry and shout, he has shut out my prayers. He has blocked my way with a high stone wall; he has made my road crooked. He has hidden like a bear or a lion, waiting to attack me. He has dragged me off the path and torn me in pieces, leaving me helpless and devastated. He has drawn his bow and made me the target for his arrows. He shot his arrows deep into my heart. My own people laugh at me. All day long they sing their mocking songs. He has filled me with bitterness and given me a bitter cup of sorrow to drink. He has made me chew on gravel. He has rolled me in the dust. Peace has been stripped away, and I have forgotten what prosperity is. I cry out, "My splendour is gone! Everything I had hoped for from the Lord is lost!" The thought of my suffering and homelessness is bitter beyond words. I will never forget this awful time, as I grieve over my loss. Yet I still dare to hope when I remember this: The faithful love of the Lord never ends! His mercies never cease. Great is his faithfulness; his mercies begin afresh each morning. I say to myself, "The Lord is my inheritance; therefore, I will hope in him!"

Reflection

We're all very good at saying 'I'm fine, thanks' when asked 'how are you?' but we know that's not always true. There is much that is not fine in our world, our society, our church, in ourselves. Life can be messy and exhausting, can't it? Filled with times of worry and grief, confusion and anger, that leaves us sighing and even screaming inside with questions like: why? How long? What now? Where are you God?

Today, may we take a moment to discover the lost art of lament and be still and silent and wait, letting our mask slip before God, trusting that nothing is off limits and that we are all heard and held by the one whose love is great, whose compassion never wavers, and whose mercy is as sure as the sun that rose in the sky this morning.

Prayer

Loving God, these words of lament have no sell-by date; they are timely now as ever.
And so we cry out for those who have suffered, and suffer still -
the homeless, the marginalised, the excluded.
And maybe we are praying for ourselves?
Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Ever present God, we are keen to move to times of rejoicing.
But now we would tarry a while,
sitting with those who suffer,
remembering with those who have lost
and being silent with those who have no words to offer.
Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

And yet, O God, we dare to hope
when we remember too that
your faithful love never ends
and that your mercies never cease.
Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer - our prayer of gratitude.

Constant and trustworthy God, great is your faithfulness.
This morning, might we know your love and mercy afresh.
This morning, might we sense anew that you are the same
from everlasting to everlasting and yet new
with the dawning, fresh as the dew of the morning.
Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

And so go in peace
and may the blessing of the Creator,
the Saviour
and the Sustainer be yours in full
AMEN.

Daily Activity

Pray the Rainbow

As you walk or enjoy your garden or home look out for colours of the rainbow.
(If you're doing this with children why not draw a rainbow before you leave,
or create a checklist of the colours to help you tick off the colours as you spot them.)

When you spot something ...

Red: Say thank you to God for how big his love for us is.

Orange: Ask God to help us be patient and kind to others as everything keeps changing. Yellow:
Think of something you're excited about and say thank you to God!

Green: Ask God to help us be content with what we have and not to want what our friends have.

Blue: Tell God what is making us sad and worried and ask him to help us.

Purple: Remember who God is. Pray 'God you are ...' (completing the sentence)

Pink: Stop and listen. What might God be saying to you?