

## Thought for the Day

*Thought for the day is based on one of the day's lectionary readings.*

*For the Bible online, go to: <http://bible.oremus.org/>*

*Choose your version (we use NRSV in church)*

*Copy and paste the reference into the search box and the passage will be displayed.*

Thought for the day

Friday 27 March

Psalm 17

Have you noticed how the language of war is being used about the coronavirus? We are at war, we are fighting it. It is an invisible enemy. I expect the enemies of the Psalmist were human ones, but his words could apply also to our adversary. It too lurks in secret places, surrounding us on every side. The Psalmist pleads with God to deliver him and save him; God is a refuge, a saviour, and actually sometimes seems to be a powerful warrior – ‘deliver me from the wicked by your sword’. But mostly he speaks of God in tender language: ‘show me your loving kindness’, he prays, and imagines God as a great mother bird spreading protective wings over the young: ‘Keep me as the apple of your eye; hide me under the shadow of your wings’. Those beautiful words form part of the late evening service of Compline, committing ourselves into God’s care while we sleep through the night. When I pray those words I picture my loved ones, committing them to God for the night.

The Psalm ends with a sense of resolution of difficulties; ‘As for me, I shall see your face in righteousness; when I awake and behold your likeness, I shall be satisfied.’ The whole business of why the innocent suffer is a puzzle which Scripture often wrestles with, especially in the Psalms. Ultimately, though, when we see God face to face, these things will fall into place. Meanwhile, we are in the midst of the battle; a battle that is fought not only by the wonderful NHS staff, but by all of us, through hand washing and social distancing, through curtailing our movements and activities, through considering others and putting their needs before ours. Our greatest weapon in this? ‘Love your neighbour, as you love yourself.’

*Keep us, good Lord, under the shadow of your mercy in this time of uncertainty and distress.  
Sustain and support the anxious and fearful, and lift up all who are brought low;  
that we may rejoice in your comfort,  
knowing that nothing can separate us from your love  
in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.*