

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.

Thursday 16 April

Psalm 146

The Lord looses those that are bound, the Lord opens the eyes of the blind, the Lord watches over the stranger in the land; he upholds the orphan and widow.

This is one of the Psalms set for today, and the readings also include Acts chapter 3 where Peter heals the lame man in the temple by the power of the risen Jesus, the 'Author of life'. There is a very strong theme running through much of Scripture that God cares deeply about the weak and vulnerable- those who are sick or disabled, those who are oppressed or disadvantaged, those at the bottom of the heap. This theme is strong in the prophets and in the Psalms. It's not quite so dominant the history books of the Old Testament. I wonder if that's because the prophets were trying to call the people back to the right priorities – what God really wants of us. And many psalms expressed the voices of those who were calling out for justice and compassion. The same theme is clear in the gospels by Jesus' example in his actions and in the company that he chose to keep. The way he washed the disciples' feet on Maundy Thursday gave us the example of how Christian leadership ought to work. And ultimately of course we find Jesus identifying with the weakest and most helpless as he goes to the cross and submits to a cruel and unjust death.

Can we possibly miss the message that our attention ought to be focussed on those in our own society who are now suffering most? Our thoughts are with the sick at this time more than perhaps ever before as we pray more fervently than ever for healing and wholeness, for protection for our health workers, for carers, for families of the sick. But others are suffering too. It is disturbing to hear about the wider effects of the pandemic, the mental health problems, the rising suicide rate, issues of poverty, of domestic abuse; the manifold ways in which people are suffering through social isolation. These needs are being recognised, for which we praise God, and there is a chance that our society as a whole may become healthier and more compassionate through this whole dreadful experience – so long as we don't forget, once things return to 'normal', that this is what God requires of us – to do justly and love mercy. To bring life and hope and healing and wholeness and to share those good things with all in our communities, with all; just as Jesus did.

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.