

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.

Wednesday 8 April

Hebrews 12.1-3

'Let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us...'

This little nugget in Hebrews is immensely cheering and encouraging. If you look back at the previous chapter, you can read 40 verses of examples of faith, working through all of biblical history and ending with a pretty devastating summary of persecution and suffering. These people form the 'cloud of witnesses' which surrounds us invisibly, to inspire us by their example and to encourage us. The writer concludes that whatever our own trials may be, whatever we are called to live through, we too can persevere as they did; can we really say that our trials are worse than theirs? And ultimately it is Jesus we look to, the greatest example of all, who endured even the cross and death and has reached the joy that is found at the right hand of God.

When I am making pastoral phone calls to check how people are, it so often happens that they say 'there are so many worse off than me' and yet I know that that very person has considerable challenges and difficulties to cope with in their life. Those who cope best are the ones who focus on the positive, however small that may be – sunshine, perhaps, or birdsong, or the sight of spring blossom- and they focus not on their own difficulties but on their blessings, and remembering the many who are worse off. This is good advice psychologically as well as spiritually.

This week as we think about Jesus walking the way of the cross in the midst of the Covid 19 pandemic, I pray that the remembrance of his suffering and perseverance may bring us all strength. Strength to go through trials that we really don't know how to bear or survive. We see from his agony in the garden that he experienced this, but resolved to continue, to persevere.

'Therefore lift your drooping hands and strengthen your weak knees, and make straight paths for your feet.' Hebrews 12.12

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.