

Coach House Church BEACONS

31ST MARCH 2020

LEAD ME TO THE ROCK

Psalm 33:6-9

The Lord merely spoke, and the heavens were created.

He breathed the word, and all the stars were born.

⁷ He assigned the sea its boundaries and locked the oceans in vast reservoirs.

⁸ Let the whole world fear the Lord, and let everyone stand in awe of him.

⁹ For when he spoke, the world began! It appeared at his command.

If we believe that God is the creator as in Psalm 33 then we believe in a greater power, far bigger than our minds can fully comprehend. A power that speaks and whose words are enough to create; a power that is solid, strong, firm, decisive.

We can easily see the strength and power of Almighty God reflected in the high splendour of the mountains or the mighty crashing waves. We can stand in awe at the beauty of creation around us.

PSALM 33:6-9

The Lord merely spoke,

But, God, the creator is also God the protector and Saviour of all that he has created.

Almighty God stepped down into his creation in the form of Jesus so that he could make a way to protect us and to save us.

There are times in our lives when we are acutely aware of our limitations and our shortcomings of our need for protection and security.

Every year our church family and friends have a holiday in the Lake District. One of the things to notice when we are out walking is that the Herdwick sheep are out on the fells in all weathers: rain (and there's plenty of it, the clue is in the name, lake district) there's also wind, snow, sleet and even baking hot sun. Herdwick sheep take it all in their stride. They

are designed to endure harsh conditions and all sorts of weather...we are not. We need shelter and protection.

In Psalm 27:5

⁵ For He, God, will conceal me there when troubles come; He will hide me in His sanctuary. He will place me out of reach on a high rock.

I like the idea of a place of safety and protection described here. It's a place where we are concealed, hidden. It's a sanctuary and it's high and out of the way of trouble.

However, it does say 'when' **troubles** come not 'if'. In the current situation, no-one is exempt from trouble or difficulty. We are all in it together. We cannot avoid the situation but we can ask for God's help. God, through His Holy Spirit brings us peace. As Psalm 46:10 says 'Be still and know that I am God'.

Psalm 27 also says that 'he will hide me in his **sanctuary**'.

At the time the psalmist was writing, an army on the battlefield would have a sanctuary, a royal pavilion, or tent set up for the King, surrounded by the army. By the King's invitation, with his permission and authority you could take refuge, finding safety and security, not protected by the army but by the very presence of the King. The word used for 'hide' means to secrete and then to defend or protect- this was all provided by the King's presence.

The word pavilion comes from papilio, or butterfly. It signifies a tent made of cloth stretched out on poles like wings. Way back in the Old Testament, the sanctuary was a tent, a meeting place with God, and in the centre was the Holy of Holies, the place where God spoke and displayed his divine power. The pavilion, tabernacle, sanctuary, is a place of refuge, the place of hope and not despair, where we find the security with God our creator.

Psalm 27 also says that he will place me out of reach on a high rock. It is echoed in Psalm 61:

1 Hear my cry, O God; listen to my prayer. **2** From the ends of the earth I call to you, I call as my heart grows faint; **lead me to the rock that is higher than I.** **3** For you have been my refuge, a strong tower against the foe. **4** I long to dwell in your tent forever and take refuge in the shelter of your wings.

There is an acknowledgement that the psalmist needs help, a recognition that personal strength is not enough to deal with a situation. Now I don't like heights at all but this reference doesn't feel scary and high. This is a place of safety not fear.

The tower of Babel was a high place and, in essence, a place where man might meet God but it was a symbol of self-confidence, of pride. It was man's attempt to reach heaven through

his own knowledge, skill and strength. Whereas Psalm 61 ..lead me to a rock that is higher than I... is an acknowledgement that we don't have enough wisdom or strength of our own to deal with everything we come across in life. We need to reach out to a higher power, to Almighty God.

We can reach out to Almighty God because he made the way possible for us to contact him directly through prayer, through a conversation with him. We do this in the name of Jesus because Jesus is our direct line to God.

Through Jesus' sacrifice, death on the cross and resurrection he defeated death and paid the price for our imperfections and mistakes. Jesus ascended to heaven to sit at the right hand of God the Father, in the place of authority where he belongs, speaking on our behalf.

Hebrews 9:24 **For Christ did not enter a sanctuary made with human hands that was only a copy of the true one; he entered heaven itself, now to appear for us in God's presence. Jesus is in position, seated at the right hand of God, our Rock. We can approach Almighty God, the creator, through Jesus the High Priest**

Prayer:

Father God we come to you in the name of Jesus. We ask for your comfort and protection in these troubled times. We recognise that we don't have all the answers and at times we don't even consider you. But today, we want to acknowledge you as our Creator and Saviour, as our safe place, our security and our rock. We pray that you will give us your deep peace through your Holy Spirit and that we will put our trust in you alone.

Lord, lead me to a rock that is higher than I... May we know how much you care for us in these difficult times we pray. Amen



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