

Christ Church Freemantle

Sunday 10th May; Fifth Sunday of Easter

I often feel that all human experience can be found in the psalms; lament, misery, bitterness, revenge, apathy, violence, joy, wonder, beauty and exaltation. The emotions always feel real; there is no dumbing down and no ignoring how difficult life can be. The language is visceral and sometimes laugh out loud funny. I think it is the essential truth of them that means they seem to work as well in modern language as they do in 17th century English.



Although they were originally written as songs to be sung, they also work as poems to be read and as meditations on the human condition. One of the joys of being a chorister is singing chanted psalms, it isn't the easiest thing to learn, but when you get the hang of it, you can then really concentrate on the text itself and be carried along with it so it can become a sung prayer.

Sometimes when life is difficult and wading through long bible readings can just seem too much, the psalms can be a way forward; they acknowledge that people can hurt us deeply, even creation can conspire against us with flood, fire and sickness.

Today's Psalm 31, talks of God being our strong rock and house of

defence, and at the end, through all adversity, it ends with reassurance 'Be strong, and he shall establish your heart all ye that put your trust in the Lord.'

Psalms allow us to get angry with God and express almost inexpressible grief and sadness. When life is good, the psalms sing of the mercy and goodness of God, of the joy and wonder and sheer abundance of our life in Him.

Liz Coe

Psalm 31

IN thee, O Lord, have I put my trust : let me never be put to confusion, deliver me in thy righteousness.

Bow down thine ear to me : make haste to deliver me.

And be thou my strong rock, and house of defence : that thou mayest save me.

For thou art my strong rock, and my castle : be thou also my guide, and lead me for thy Name's sake.

Draw me out of the net that they have laid privily for me : for thou art my strength.

Into thy hands I commend my spirit : for thou hast redeemed me, O Lord, thou God of truth.

I have hated them that hold of superstitious vanities : and my trust hath been in the Lord.

I will be glad and rejoice in thy mercy : for thou hast considered my trouble, and hast known my soul in adversities.

Thou hast not shut me up into the hand of the enemy : but hast set my feet in a large room.

Have mercy upon me, O Lord, for I am in trouble : and mine eye is consumed for very heaviness; yea, my soul and my body.

For my life is waxen old with heaviness : and my years with mourning.

My strength faileth me, because of mine iniquity : and my bones are consumed.

I became a reproof among all mine enemies, but especially among my neighbours : and they of mine acquaintance were afraid of me; and they that did see me without conveyed themselves from me.

I am clean forgotten, as a dead man out of mind : I am become like a broken vessel.

For I have heard the blasphemy of the multitude : and fear is on every side, while they conspire together against me, and take their counsel to take away my life.

But my hope hath been in thee, O Lord : I have said, Thou art my God.

My time is in thy hand; deliver me from the hand of mine enemies : and from them that persecute me.

Shew thy servant the light of thy countenance: and save me for thy mercy's sake.

Let me not be confounded, O Lord, for I have called upon thee : let the ungodly be put to confusion, and be put to silence in the grave.

Let the lying lips be put to silence : which cruelly, disdainfully, and despitefully, speak against the righteous.

O how plentiful is thy goodness, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee : and that thou hast prepared for them that put their trust in thee, even before the sons of men!

Thou shalt hide them privily by thine own presence from the provoking of all men : thou shalt keep them secretly in thy tabernacle from the strife of tongues.

Thanks be to the Lord : for he hath shewed me marvellous great kindness in a strong city.

And when I made haste, I said : I am cast out of the sight of thine eyes.

Nevertheless, thou heardest the voice of my prayer : when I cried unto thee.

O love the Lord, all ye his saints : for the Lord preserveth them that are faithful, and plenteously rewardeth the proud doer.

Be strong, and he shall establish your heart : all ye that put your trust in the Lord.

Listen to the psalm being sung here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z0CnriqjVbA>