

Thought for the day:

Tuesday 31st March

Psalm 123

- ¹ To you I lift up my eyes,
to you that are enthroned in the heavens.
² As the eyes of servants look to the hand of their
master, or the eyes of a maid to the hand of her
mistress,
³ So our eyes wait upon the Lord our God,
until he have mercy upon us.
⁴ Have mercy upon us, O Lord, have mercy upon
us, for we have had more than enough of
contempt.
⁵ Our soul has had more than enough of the
scorn of the arrogant, and of the contempt of the
proud.

Reflection

Like yesterday, it is the second Psalm of morning prayer which spoke to me loud and clear. It is verses 4 and 5 which set the scene of the Psalmist in distress and pain. The central verse suggests that mercy is required on either the writer or most likely, the nation. Either way, there is a sense that things are wrong, and God can put it right.

What is interesting to note is the attention that the writer places on the eyes. In verse one, the writer's eyes are lifted up to the heavens. This is followed by an analogy of the servant looking to a master or a maid to her mistress. The Psalmist clearly knew that God was in control of all matters and this shows righteousness on behalf of the writer. We, too, need to acknowledge, possibly more than we do, that God is, indeed, in control despite what we might see happening in the world around us. I know that this statement requires much faith but it is the case. 'The earth is the Lord's and all that is in it', as we read in another Psalm.

It could be argued that many of the world's troubles might have been averted if more people were to see themselves in relation to an all-loving

and all-powerful God, rather than promoting the self to a demi-god status.

It is the reaction of the Psalmist to God which is such a wonderful example for us to follow. Where things were wrong, there was humility, not defensiveness. Where matters needed to be addressed, it was to God he looked rather than to his own skill or wisdom. Here we have a massive lesson: where life becomes messy or ugly, we can follow the example set in verse 3, 'So our eyes wait upon the Lord our God'. It is this verse which can give us a clearer insight into how to act in our current crisis. In prayer, Bible reading and personal acts of worship, we can lift our eyes to the Lord our God and wait; placing all things in his hands. As Peter encourages us, 'Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.' (1 Peter 5:7). To do this successfully, we need to lift our eyes up to God, rather than to the situation, in the full and complete knowledge that he loves us and cares for us beyond our understanding.

As with yesterday, I conclude today's thought with the Lockdown Prayer:

The doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked. (John 20.19)

Ever present God,
be with us in our isolation,
be close to us in our distancing,
be healing in our sickness,
be joy in our sadness,
be light in our darkness,
be wisdom in our confusion,
be all that is familiar when all is unfamiliar,
that when the doors reopen
we may with the zeal of Pentecost
inhabit our communities
and speak of your goodness
to an emerging world.
For Jesus' sake.
Amen.