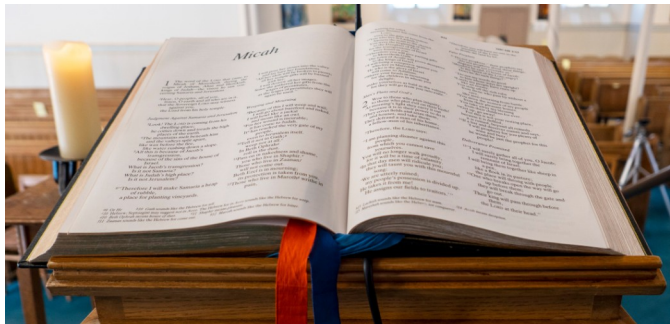




THE WORD FOR TODAY

PSALM 130—"Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord"

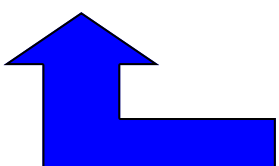


We were talking about the state of the world in our fellowship group the other day. We agreed that sometimes we could feel powerless in the face of so many people in misery and fear and distress. It can be even more depressing when we have to admit that it is the actions (or inaction) of human beings which brought about most of this distress through wars, greed, climate change and the like.

We decided that at such times we need to remind ourselves firmly that we are not powerless because we have hope in our all-powerful God, and we can pray to him.

We don't know who the writer of this Psalm is, but it was probably written after the years of Jewish exile in Babylon, some 2,500 years ago. He was in a country familiar with the same problems as our world—conflict, displacement and suffering brought about by the sins of humanity. The writer points out where people should turn in such a crisis, and why. He speaks to us in our troubled world today.

Follow the words of Psalm 130 on seven panels around the church. The first is just round the corner on the north wall of this little building and the others are on benches round the sides and back of the church building. You will be directed to them. The translation of the Bible used is the New International Version, and you can look it up on the internet under Bible Gateway.



Turn immediately left to find the first Bible extract on the bench

**“Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord;
O Lord, hear my voice.
Let your ears be attentive
to my cry for mercy.”**

1

Most people pray far more when they are in trouble. Some only ever pray when they are in the depths of despair and floundering about not knowing where to turn, but looking desperately for someone to reach out to for help.

Have you ever wondered if anybody is listening when you pray? How can we be sure?

The answer is surely to get to know this loving God of ours better. Keep in touch with him, tell him our thoughts, listen for his voice. Make prayer a regular habit—don't wait until there is a crisis!

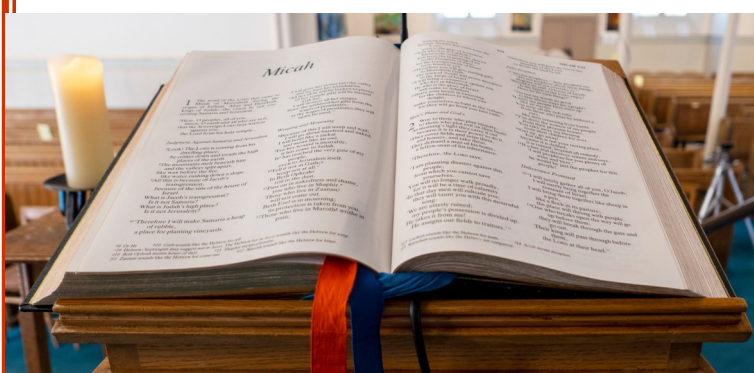


Lord, teach me to trust in you to listen to my prayers.

Help me to get to know you better.

Draw me close to you day by day, in good times as well as bad.

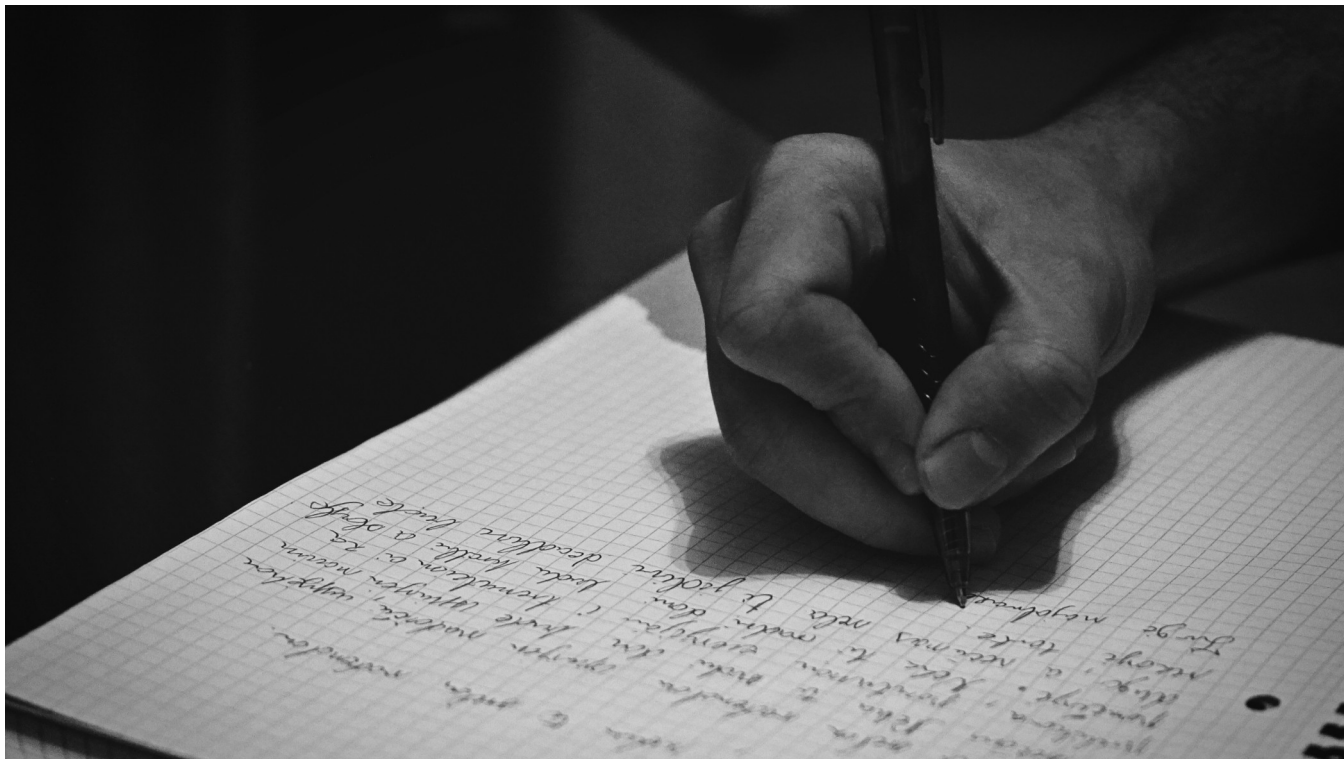
(No. 2 is on the bench just round the corner of the church building you are looking at. This might mean having to walk on the grass if scaffolding is in the way. If so, and if you want to avoid this, take the left-hand path and walk round the church clockwise until you find No. 2)



THE WORD FOR TODAY

**“If you, O Lord, kept a record of sins,
O Lord, who could stand?”**

2



The realisation that we humans are accountable for a lot of the troubles in the world is sobering. Admitting that we as individuals say and do a lot of things we shouldn't is sobering too. (And that's not counting the things we are thinking!)

What a blessing it is that God doesn't keep count of our misdemeanours. They are not recorded and kept. We can rely on that. If we are truly sorry, he forgives.

Can you honestly say that you do the same? Or do you hang on to old hurts, refuse to let them go, nurse grudges against people? It's something we all need to think about.

*Lord, it's wonderful for me to know that you do not hold my sins against me.
They are washed away because Jesus died for me.
Help me to be as forgiving with others as you are.*

(No. 3 is further along this side of the church)



THE WORD FOR TODAY

**“But with you there is forgiveness;
therefore you are feared.”**

3

God doesn't keep a record of our sins. We say sorry for what we have done—he forgives and the slate is wiped clean. The staggering thing is that this isn't a one-off occurrence. He will do the same again and again. Peter, one of the close disciples of Jesus, asked him once how many times he had to forgive people who had wronged him. The answer, meaning quite clearly that he had to keep on forgiving, was quite difficult to accept because it is not at all easy to do.

That's why the boundless forgiveness of God prompts our amazement and our worship.



***Lord, I thank you with all my heart for your love for me:
a love which never falters even when I go astray time after time.
Lord, I stand in awe of you.***

(Walk along the back of the church to find No. 4 on the bench)



THE WORD FOR TODAY

**“I wait for the Lord, my soul waits,
and in his word I put my hope.”**

4



God always keeps his promises—the Bible, God’s Word, sets out so many examples—and therefore we can have a sure hope of forgiveness and a return to God our Father. What does it mean to have our souls, our inmost beings, waiting for the Lord?

We are hoping for that personal touch—the hand that reaches out to bring us out of the depths, the arms that fold around us, the loving relationship we crave.

*Lord, deepen my trust in you.
Help me to get to know you better.
Hold me close in your loving arms.*

(Walk along the back of the church and turn right to find panel 5 on the prayer bench)



THE WORD FOR TODAY

**“My soul waits for the Lord
more than watchmen wait for the morning,
more than watchmen wait for the morning.”**

5

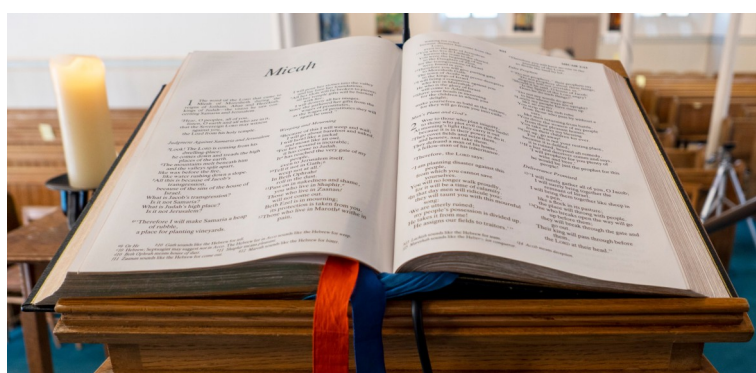


Sometimes we need to say it more than once. Day will follow night, yes, day will follow night.

And yes, God will make himself known as our loving Father. If it is truly our heart's desire, then we will find that out. We will know we are accepted, loved and cherished as a child of God. Someone we can approach not just when times are hard, but at any time, in joy or pain, to share our lives with him.

***Lord, my heart calls out to you.
Come into my life and make it whole.
Let me know your loving presence with me at all times.***

(You will be able to see No. 6 on the first bench before the tower)



THE WORD FOR TODAY

**“O Israel, put your hope in the Lord,
for with the Lord is unfailing love
and with him is full redemption.”**

6

When we know the joy of having God close to us, an ever-present loving Father, we want everybody else to know it too!

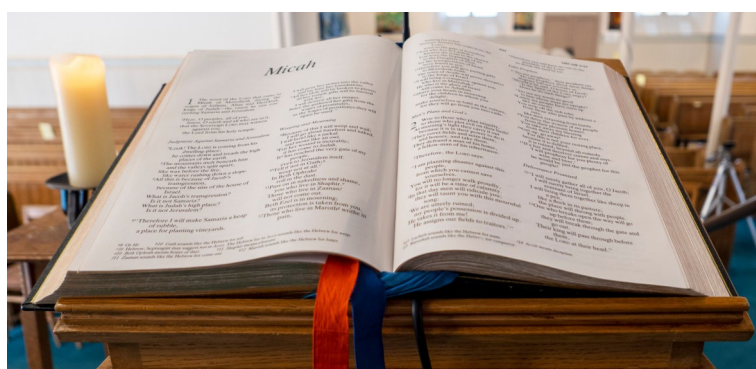
It might seem difficult to tell others about our faith, but in reality we just show it in our lives. If there is an opportunity (and there will be) we say what our experience is—God in our lives makes a difference.

God brings joy and peace because he loves us, forgives us and gives us hope. Aren't people (and nations) looking for just that?



***Lord, I want others to experience your love too.
Help me to show what you mean in my life
and not be afraid to say what a difference you make.***

(You will find No. 7 beside the Covid Memorial and the Cairn, just past the tower)



THE WORD FOR TODAY

**“He himself will redeem Israel
from all their sins.”**

7

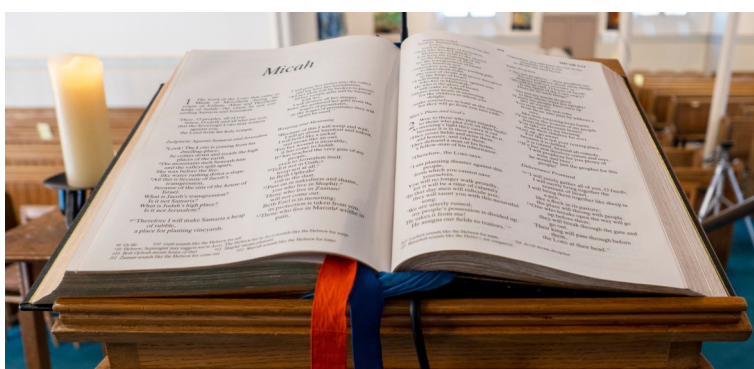
God will indeed lift the world from its depths of despair. He has a plan. He will send his Son to live on earth as a human being, and will sacrifice him on the cross to save his people from all their sins. The world will be offered forgiveness. The helping hand is there to be grasped.

Over two thousand years since Jesus came to earth that helping hand is still there for a world in great need of it, to lift it out of the depths. There is hope! Our awesome, loving God reaches out through the sacrifice of Jesus to all who turn to him. Can we help to point the way?



***Lord, I believe that nobody is beyond your love and forgiveness.
Heal this broken and suffering world I pray.
Bring its people back to you.***

***Liberton Kirk has no minister at the moment, but you can contact us at
minister@libertonkirk.net and your request will be dealt with by the appropriate person.***



THE WORD FOR TODAY

PHOTOGRAPHIC CREDITS

Picture of Bible on all pages by Gary Ross

Introduction	Joshua Earle on Unsplash
Panel 1	Eduardo Ramos on Unsplash
Panel 2	nedimshoots on Unsplash
Panel 3	Getty Images on Unsplash
Panel 4	A.C. on Unsplash
Panel 5	Kateryna Hliznitsova on Unsplash
Panel 6	A.C. on Unsplash
Panel 7	Cdoncel on Unsplash