

## A meditation on Psalm 25 for Monday in Holy Week

Monday in Holy Week.

Yesterday we had all the noise, elation, joy and anticipation of Palm Sunday. We've been lifted on the tidal wave of excitement, the expectation of the crowd that Jesus was about to declare his earthly kingship and drive out the Romans.

But nothing has happened. No great call to arms. No mustering of volunteers. No stirring speeches to warm the hearts of the oppressed. A bit of argy-bargy at the Temple, and some more clashes with the religious elite; but no signs of reclaiming the Kingship and getting rid of the occupying forces.

It's still. But the stillness is like that before a gathering storm. With the benefit of nearly 2000 years hindsight we know that the clouds are gathering towards a tumultuous train of events which will leave the world forever changed.

But all we can do today, is wait.

Wait – and prepare. Prepare our hearts and minds, our souls and our bodies for what we know is coming.

Perhaps you are a person who habitually enters into the events of Holy Week with your imagination. You put yourself in the room for the Last Supper, feel the cool of the water on your feet, taste the bread and the wine. You doze in the Garden; deny in the courtyard; weep in the street; share the horror of the cross; feel the emptiness of death. Maybe the pain and terror of Good Friday leaves you drained and wounded, to the extent that you cannot absorb the “good” of Good Friday – that Jesus endured all that in love, to open up the way for you to come back to God. Perhaps you share the transition from despair to joy of Jesus' friends on Easter Day – and also their sense of being overwhelmed at what has happened.

Or perhaps you are a person who takes a more ‘bird's-eye’ view. Who looks to the bigger picture of what has been described as “God's great drama of salvation”. Not the grotesque picture of an angry God seeking vengeance on his Son in place of “sinners”, but the life-giving image of a generous God giving of himself to make up the shortfall in what we are able to bring to the relationship. A new agreement, open to all who are willing to accept it. A picture which acknowledges the pain and sacrifice of Jesus, yet maybe compares it with the pain and trauma of childbirth, the precursor to the joy of new life. And this approach is maybe less “intense”, but nonetheless deeply meaningful.

Or perhaps you come from a different stance altogether. There is not one set, “right”, way to engage with the narrative. Yet, however we approach the events of the next week, we will benefit most if we do so from the firm foothold of knowing that we know the end of the story. From being confident in our status as God's beloved and forgiven children. From acknowledging that God will go – has gone – to unimaginable lengths to draw us back.

The set psalm for this evening is Psalm 25. It's a psalm ascribed to King David, stating his trust in God's love and mercy, his desire to live in God's way, and his repentance for when he fails.

So let's use some words from this psalm as a meditation – to set our feet on solid ground as we begin this journey through Holy Week and on into the world-changing events of Good Friday and Easter Day.

Using Scripture in this way is less about understanding it with our minds, and more about allowing its words to sink into our innermost being so our souls can respond to God's truth. So please make yourself comfortable. If you're watching on the video, we will put up an image of a candle on the screen. If you're on the phone, you might like to light a candle of your own. I'll read the psalm slowly, giving us time to make our own response. If you're reading the meditation off the page, then please take it slowly, stopping at the places indicated to make your own response. You may like to find a cross, or light a candle as a visual focus for your reflections.

### From **Psalm 25**

<sup>1</sup>To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul.

<sup>2</sup>O my God, in you I trust;

*[pause]*

<sup>4</sup>Make me to know your ways, O Lord;  
teach me your paths.

<sup>5</sup>Lead me in your truth, and teach me,  
for you are the God of my salvation;  
for you I wait all day long.

*[pause]*

<sup>6</sup>Be mindful of your mercy, O Lord, and of your steadfast love,  
for they have been from of old.

<sup>7</sup>Do not remember the sins of my youth or my transgressions;  
according to your steadfast love remember me,  
for your goodness' sake, O Lord!

*[pause]*

<sup>8</sup>Good and upright is the Lord;  
therefore he instructs sinners in the way.

<sup>9</sup>He leads the humble in what is right,  
and teaches the humble his way.

<sup>10</sup> All the paths of the Lord are steadfast love and faithfulness,  
for those who keep his covenant and his decrees.

*[pause]*

<sup>16</sup> Turn to me and be gracious to me,  
for I am lonely and afflicted.

<sup>17</sup> Relieve the troubles of my heart,  
and bring me out of my distress.

<sup>18</sup> Consider my affliction and my trouble,  
and forgive all my sins.

*[pause]*

<sup>20</sup> O guard my life, and deliver me;  
do not let me be put to shame, for I take refuge in you.

<sup>21</sup> May integrity and uprightness preserve me,  
for I wait for you.

*[pause]*

As we wait and watch, weep and wonder, may we hold fast to the rock of God's unending love.

Amen.