

The Lord's Goodness in the Land of the Living

Annie

Scriptures:

Psalm 27:13

Psalm 24

Romans 5:1-5

Exodus 33:18-19



"I would have lost heart had I not believed to see the Lord's goodness in the land of the living"

It's a strange turn of phrase "to lose heart", yet it so aptly describes what true despair feels like. There is that sickening, lead like heaviness in the pit of your stomach, as if every breath, every heartbeat is an almost impossible struggle. As if the very organ that keeps pumping our life blood around our weary bodies, is being squeezed and stalled, threatening to stop altogether. And it terrifies us.

The psalmist knew of only one way out of that despair, the hope and anticipation that he would indeed see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. This was, and still is, the only answer to that sickening, desperate, loss of heart feeling. He believed fervently in this answer and his despair eased, he did not lose heart, because of this precious hope.

In Psalm 24 we have a wonderful image of the One who is our Hope, an image that is so filled with joy and awe, there in God's word to inspire and encourage all who are feeling, even slightly, despairing. *"Lift up your heads, O you gates! Lift up, you everlasting doors! And the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The Lord of hosts, He is the King of glory. Selah"* This King of Glory, our Redeemer, our Saviour, our Friend and Brother, is the One who fulfils this promise that we will see the goodness of the Lord on our Earthly journey. All we have to do is open the door, open the gate and let Him in.

The image in that psalm is what the Jews were taught to expect when their Messiah would come, they were expecting somebody who was going to come and defeat their Roman overlords. For four hundred years there had been silence in the heavens, no prophetic word from God in all that time. So, this Messiah was the One they saw as coming to set them free, physically free. But this isn't what Jesus did. He came as a baby laid in a feeding trough for cattle, basically born amongst the poorest of the poor and He fulfilled all the prophecies that were spoken about Him, but not in a way that the Jews were expecting their Messiah, the Anointed One, to do. It's much more likely that they were expecting Him to come and open the gates of the city of Jerusalem and victoriously free them. But those doors were not the everlasting doors, in AD70 they were gone, just as Jesus had prophesied. And they have never really been rebuilt since. So, let us think about this and work out what this psalm means for us in the 21st century.

We know, because Jesus told us, that He had to leave this Earth, but that we would not be left alone, Holy Spirit, part of the Triune God, would always and forever be with us, guiding and reminding us of the Hope that was fulfilled in this promise. We are able to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living, because He dwells within us, longing for us to engage with Him in every and all situations of our life.

What do those doors spoken of in the psalm represent for us, are they in fact the doors of our lives? Jesus is, without doubt, the King of Glory. So do we open the doors and let him in? Or are we barring these doors? Putting great big timbers behind them so nobody can get through these doors, the doors of our lives? Are we denying ourselves the amazing opportunities to see God's goodness and His Glory each moment of the day?

Our Hope that is the antidote to the despair and grief we may feel when we see the sorrow, the pain, the constant wars that abound in the world, waits, patiently, lovingly and powerfully for us to open the door of our life.

Psalm 36 Verse 8, says "*in You is the fountain of life and in Your Light I see light*". There is only one true Light. and when we see our Saviour, our Messiah, we see that One True Light. When we drink from that Fountain of Life and our eyes are opened we see the only true Light and that Light is like a laser beam that enables us to open that door, to reveal the One and only Hope who lives within us as the Goodness and the Glory of the Lord, here in the land of the living.

Prayer: Abba Father, in this Advent season may we fill ourselves to overflowing from the Fountain of Life, drinking the Living Water, that we may experience and share Your Goodness, Your Glory, Your Life to all we meet. In Jesus Name we pray, Amen.