

## Intercessions 24 February 2018

Readings: Romans 5.3-5; Mark 8.34-end

### Job 24 An Illusion of Security

**1-12** “..... if Judgment Day isn’t hidden from the Almighty, why are we kept in the dark?

There are people out there getting by with murder - stealing and lying and cheating.

They rip off the poor and exploit the unfortunate, push the helpless into the ditch, bully the weak so that they fear for their lives.

The poor, like stray dogs and cats, scavenge for food in back alleys.

They sort through the garbage of the rich, eke out survival on handouts.

Homeless, they shiver through cold nights on the street; they’ve no place to lay their heads.

Exposed to the weather, wet and frozen, they huddle in makeshift shelters.

Nursing mothers have their babies snatched from them; the infants of the poor are kidnapped and sold.

They go about patched and threadbare; even the hard workers go hungry.

No matter how backbreaking their labor, they can never make ends meet.

People are dying right and left, groaning in torment.

The wretched cry out for help and God does nothing, acts like nothing’s wrong!

The words of Job from The Message, Eugene Peterson’s paraphrase of the bible, capture Job’s despair at a particular time of his life. Lord, today we are still seeing what Job saw, and feeling something of the despair that he felt. In the book of Job, his “comforters” words are shown up to be a sham. Lord, we ask for just a small measure of Job’s faithfulness and deep knowledge of you, as we seek to pray for so many people around the world who are suffering from exploitation and living in poverty, the homeless and refugees, those who have been kidnapped and are now living in slavery, as this week in Nigeria, and those living defenceless and so vulnerable in war zones, particularly at the moment in Syria.

Lord, in your mercy ..... **hear our prayer**

Job continued:

**13-17** “Then there are those who avoid light at all costs, who scorn the light-filled path.

When the sun goes down, the murderer gets up - kills the poor and robs the defenseless.

Sexual predators can’t wait for nightfall, thinking, ‘No one can see us now.’

Burglars do their work at night, but keep well out of sight through the day.

They want nothing to do with light.

Deep darkness is morning for that bunch; they make the terrors of darkness their companions in crime.

Lord, we hear and see in the news so much at the moment about sexual exploitation and assault, and inappropriate behaviour in the workplace. We acknowledge our involvement and contribution to sustaining broken economic and social systems. Lord, again we ask for just a small measure of Job’s faithfulness and deep knowledge of you, as we seek to pray for so many people around the world who are exploited and assaulted, particularly those living under unjust and self-serving governments and in areas controlled by groups of men who see women as just a commodity to be traded and enslaved. We pray for charities and NGOs where stories of inappropriate and unacceptable behaviour have emerged, that they will be able to root this out of their organisations and continue to be able to do their life-critical work.

Dear God,  
Thank you that you hear our cries,  
Thank you that you draw close to the broken-hearted.  
Lord, we lift up to you people we know that are hurting,  
Please be with them, holding them, comforting them.  
Restore our hearts and theirs with your closeness,  
Draw near to the world, Father,  
And restore the heart of our society.

*(Source: Tearfund RESTORE Lent reflection 23 February 2018)*

Lord, in your mercy ..... **hear our prayer**

As we take up our cross, counting the cost of discipleship and acknowledging that suffering is part of life:

We hold before God:

Those we know for whom life is very difficult; those who have difficult decisions to make, and who honestly do not know what is the right the thing to do.

We hold before God:

Those we know who have difficult tasks to do and face, and who fear they may fail them; those who have difficult temptations to face, and who know only too well that they may fall to them, if they try to meet them alone.

We hold before God:

Those we know who have difficult people to work with; those who have to suffer unjust treatment, unfair criticism, unappreciated work.

We hold before God:

Those who are sad because someone they loved has died; and any who are disappointed in something for which they hoped very much.

*(Source: A general intercession for those in trouble; William Barclay; Celtic Daily Prayer Book 1, p182)*

Within our community, we ask for healing, protection and restoration for .....

We remember those who have died and their families and friends who mourn .....

We remember the anniversaries of .....

Lord, in your mercy ..... **hear our prayer**

As we have heard this morning, the way of the cross is also the way towards resurrection. With the apostle Paul, we want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the sharing of his sufferings by becoming like him in his death. *(Philippians 3.10 MSG)*

May the combination of God's steady, constant calling and warm, personal counsel in Scripture come to characterise us, keeping us alert for whatever he will do next. *(Romans 15.4 MSG)*

May our dependably steady and warmly personal God develop maturity in us. *(Romans 15.5 MSG)*

May the God of green hope fill us with joy, fill us up with peace, so that our believing lives, filled with the life-giving energy of the Holy Spirit, will brim over with hope! *(Romans 15.13 MSG)*

Merciful Father ..... **accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ**