

Giffnock: the Park Church
JANUARY
DEVOTIONAL
Sunday 17th January 2021



Good morning everyone,

Welcome to another Sunday Morning Devotional. I hope you are not feeling too daunted by the restrictions. I don't know about anyone else I can't help but think many of us will be at the stage now that we are getting fed up with all this indoors stuff and we long to be able to get out and about and to meet with family and friends again as inherently we are, by nature, social creatures and we need the companionship of each other. Living in such isolation, as a consequence of this Pandemic, has had a toll on all of us, for some to a greater extent than others.

For our thinking this morning that set me on a track of thought that sought to centre on what the bible has to say to us about being alone which I hope will be of encouragement and reassurance in these days where things seem to be in a constant state of flux that even those at the centre of national decision making, (in Westminster and/or the seats of the Devolved Nations) all struggle to keep up with and at times find the best way to respond.

In our churches we face contending with advice at times we might think is overkill at worst or eminently sensible at best. Do churches open? Should Churches remain closed? Are we safer coming to church than going to the supermarket? The word 'Fellowship' has often been seen as a very churchy word to use but it is more fully understood in the context of coming together very often for a particular purpose - usually the context of worship but it obviously has wider applications too. In a wider community context it is seen as a word that is somewhat dated. The best literary understanding will probably come from the reading authors like of JR Tolkien's Lord of the Rings. In professional employment and academic terms it is a word that accords a degree of status, a fellow of the Royal Society or as in my previous

profession, a fellow of the Institute of Medical Laboratory Science, (for the record that was a dizzy height I never aspired to). They say that you only really miss something when it unavailable to you. How true this is when it comes to fellowship with our own families in some cases and our church families. The one thing I feel reassured by in all this is that Lockdowns do not impede the presence of God with us and I thought we might explore our understanding of that in our reflection this morning which I hope reassures and encourages, letting us trust more and doubt less in our Heavenly Father's love for us even in and especially at these times.

A short poem will follow this letter but in the mean time I hope you all remain free of the Covid blight and remember those suffering with it in your prayers. Have a good week.

Calum D. Macdonald




Remember

Not everything is locked down

**Sunrise is not locked down
Fresh Air is not locked down
Friendship is not locked down
Creativity is not locked down
Prayers are not locked down
Hobbies are not locked down
Kindness is not locked down
Learning is not locked down
Conversation is not locked down
Imagination is not locked down
Sunsets are not locked down
Hope is not locked down**

**Cherish what you have
Stay at home and make the most of your time
Be safe Be well**



Church News

In Loving Memory



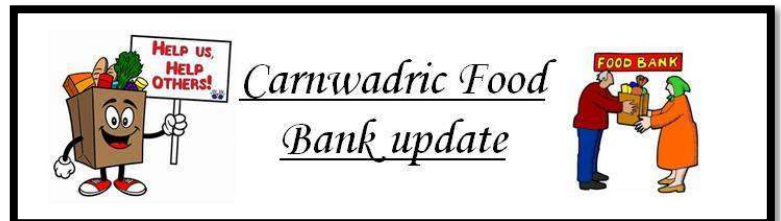
**Please Remember those who
Mourn today :**

The close friends of Miss Betty Carnie whose funeral is to be a private service held in Daldowie Crematorium Monday 18th January at 9.45pm.

**Please Remember those who
Mourn today:**

All in the Family of the late Mrs Margaret McPhee. Original Funeral arrangements have been amended and the service has been rescheduled for Tuesday 26th January at 4pm in Linn Crematorium. For any further details Please speak with the minister

***Please Remember those today
who continue to Mourn for
Loved ones since the time of
their Funeral***



***A THANK YOU AGAIN TO ALL WHO HAVE
BEEN SO SUPPORTIVE OF THE FOODBANK
SET UP AT CARNWADRIC CHURCH***

Now that the New Year is well and truly under way I wanted to say that although the office is unable to be open for the time being until our restrictions begin to ease up, I will be down at the church 2 mornings a week for the sole purpose of being available to have supplies dropped off for the Food bank that to date many have been so supportive of. Each week I will confirm the 2 days I will be available for this. This week I will be at the Church on Tuesday 19th and Wednesday 20th January from 10am – 12noon.

Many thanks Again
Calum D. Macdonald

The Death of Lynn Paterson

I am sure many of you many of you have already of the tragic news that unfolded in the middle this week of the sudden death of Lynn Paterson, the daughter of one of our Members, Mrs Susan Paterson. Please Remember Susan and her husband Robert, Lynn's brother Stephen and all in the wider family at this time.



If Bible Christianity is to survive the present world upheaval, we shall need to have a fresh revelation of the greatness and the beauty of Jesus.... He alone can raise our cold hearts to rapture and restore again the art of true worship. — A. W. Tozer

'Love...bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends.'

(1 Corinthians 13:7-8)

A Prayer adapted from Christian Aid

Father in heaven as we come to you again in yet another week of lockdown help us to see passed our own limitations to the One who is Eternal and Omnipotent to save. Remind us of your never ending compassion and love for us again that we might begin to appreciate all the more who You truly are and what you are capable of. Help us to see your Grace and forgiveness at work again. Help us to see again the tremendous gift you have given in your Son and our Saviour whose task was to give himself as the ransom for many. Forgive our lack of faith and trust at times along with our inconsistency in being able to live our lives in way that truly honours You.

Our Gracious Loving God and Father as we come to you in these difficult days, strengthen our innermost being with your love that bears all things, Help us see past the doubts and fears the weight of this global pandemic and disease impacts us with and help us see beyond the long haul of watching for symptoms and our waiting patiently for this to pass.

In our watching and waiting, help us to keep our gaze fixed on you, the author and perfecter of our Faith as we seek to follow your example and fulfil your Command as we look out for our neighbours both near and far.

Instil in our shaken souls the belief and hope that all things are possible through your creative love that makes enemies become friends, strangers in the midst become welcome, for the hungry to be fed and for the thirsty to be filled, that the Homeless find Shelter and that the lost may be found.

We thank you for the wonder and marvel of science to be able to source solutions as we discover new things and understand old things better.

We pray that resources will be more generously shared that everyone, everywhere, may have what they need, cutting across borders with your perfect love and casting out our deepest fears as we rid ourselves of a selfishness that divides. May your love that never ends, be our comfort, May it bring a strength and be a guide for the wellbeing of all but most of all, we pray that it Ascribes our glorious Father in Heaven, his Precious Son and ever abiding Spirit all the Praise and all the Honour this day and every Day... Amen.



Jonah Ch 1vs 1 - 16



Jonah 1

New International Version

Jonah Flees From the LORD

1 The word of the LORD came to Jonah son of Amittai: ² “Go to the great city of Nineveh and preach against it, because its wickedness has come up before me.”

³ But Jonah ran away from the LORD and headed for Tarshish. He went down to Joppa, where he found a ship bound for that port. After paying the fare, he went aboard and sailed for Tarshish to flee from the LORD.

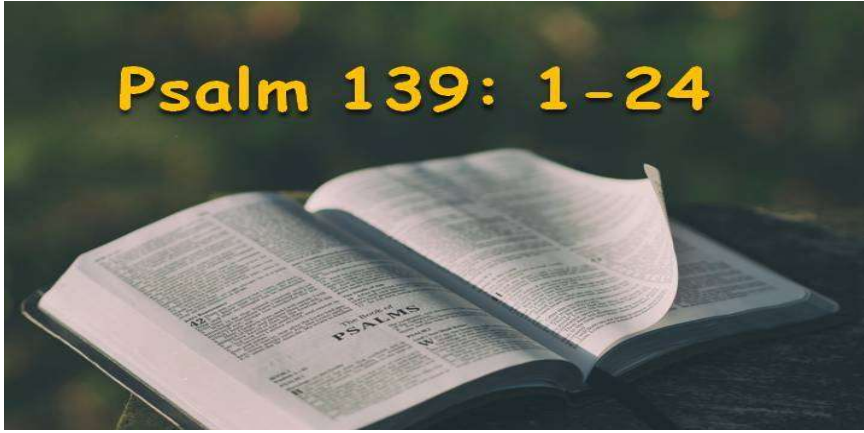
⁴ Then the LORD sent a great wind on the sea, and such a violent storm arose that the ship threatened to break up. ⁵ All the sailors were afraid and each cried out to his own god. And they threw the cargo into the sea to lighten the ship.

But Jonah had gone below deck, where he lay down and fell into a deep sleep. ⁶ The captain went to him and said, “How can you sleep? Get up and call on your god! Maybe he will take notice of us so that we will not perish.” ⁷ Then the sailors said to each other, “Come, let us cast lots to find out who is responsible for this calamity.” They cast lots and the lot fell on Jonah. ⁸ So they asked him, “Tell us, who is responsible for making all this trouble for us? What kind of work do you do? Where do you come from? What is your country? From what people are you?”

⁹ He answered, “I am a Hebrew and I worship the LORD, the God of heaven, who made the sea and the dry land.” ¹⁰ This terrified them and they asked, “What have you done?” (They knew he was running away from the LORD, because he had already told them so.)

¹¹ The sea was getting rougher and rougher. So they asked him, “What should we do to you to make the sea calm down for us?” ¹² “Pick me up and throw me into the sea,” he replied, “and it will become calm. I know that it is my fault that this great storm has come upon you.” ¹³ Instead, the men did their best to row back to land. But they could not, for the sea grew even wilder than before. ¹⁴ Then they cried out to the LORD, “Please, LORD, do not let us die for taking this man’s life. Do not hold us accountable for killing an innocent man, for you, LORD, have done as you pleased.” ¹⁵ Then they took Jonah and threw him overboard, and the raging sea grew calm. ¹⁶ At this the men greatly feared the LORD, and they offered a sacrifice to the LORD and made vows to him.

Psalm 139: 1-24



Psalm 139

New International Version

For the director of music. Of David. A psalm.

- ¹ You have searched me, LORD, and you know me.
² You know when I sit and when I rise; **you perceive my thoughts from afar.**
³ You discern my going out and my lying down; **you are familiar with all my ways.**
⁴ **Before a word is on my tongue you, LORD, know it completely.**
⁵ You hem me in behind and before, and you lay your hand upon me.
⁶ Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too lofty for me to attain.
⁷ Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence?
⁸ If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there.
⁹ If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea,
¹⁰ even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast.
¹¹ If I say, “Surely the darkness will hide me and the light become night around me,”
¹² even the darkness will not be dark to you; the night will shine like the day,
for darkness is as light to you.
¹³ For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother’s womb.
¹⁴ I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made;
your works are wonderful, I know that full well.
¹⁵ My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place,
when I was woven together in the depths of the earth.
¹⁶ Your eyes saw my unformed body; all the days ordained for me were written in your
book before one of them came to be.
¹⁷ How precious to me are your thoughts,^[a] God! How vast is the sum of them!
¹⁸ Were I to count them, they would outnumber the grains of sand— when I awake,
I am still with you.
¹⁹ If only you, O God, would slay the wicked! Away from me, you who are bloodthirsty!
²⁰ They speak of you with evil intent; your adversaries misuse your name.
²¹ Do I not hate those who hate you, LORD,
and abhor those who are in rebellion against you?
²² I have nothing but hatred for them; I count them my enemies.
²³ Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts.
²⁴ See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

Sunday 17th January 2021



JANUARY

DEVOTIONAL



Good morning,

In listening to the First Minister's Questions this week, the First Minister and those representing the Scottish Cabinet in Debate were speaking of how there was a need to enhance the restrictions even further in order to seek to slow the rate of spread by the new variant of the Covid-19 virus, the consequence of which would be to limit our civil liberties further in order to save lives. While I am sure we all understand the aim and intention behind all this. I am also sure that we are increasingly becoming aware of the down side of all this revealing a sense of increased isolation. It is bad enough that one can't get out to the shops and for some the desire to go out and browse has been well and truly extinguished while for others the more critical issue may be that of not being able to meet with friends or Family. In these recent weeks we have come across stories of more and more people struggling with a sense of Isolation.

When I left school I did not go on to University or College as many of my school pals did. Instead, got a job with Day Release Training working in Ruchill Hospital as a lab technician in the Department of Pathology of Infectious Disease which would have been at the coal face of this Pandemic had Covid-19 hit the nation in the 1980's as Ruchill Hospital was the infectious diseases Hospital for Glasgow at the time. I can't help but think I've maybe dodged a bullet there by some 34 years. Why mention this I hear you ask? Well, it is because everyone used to panic as we got closer to Christmas because we still had much Christmas shopping to do but the bank balance was running low by then. Greater Glasgow Health Board as it was then, always paid their staff a few days before Christmas and so everyone raced to the shops with a new influx of cash to buy the pressies they still needed to get as well as the foods and drink for that other great Scottish

Tradition - Hogmanay. The problem was the next pay packet you received was not until the end of January sometimes a six or nearly 7 week month in pay packet terms, where the cry of those after Christmas and New Year was always - "Why is there so much month at the end of the money?"

I have always felt January was a long month at the best of times. We wind down after Christmas and then things are slow initially to begin afresh in the New Year. That being said, both Wilma and I were commenting on how this month has felt particularly long and that for the first time in a very long time it has felt a wee bit like that 7 week month? While that is not a reflection on being strapped for cash as such we have I suspect feeling a wee bit of that isolation that the Pandemic has created more acutely for so many others. That got me thinking on what God's Word has to say for us in these moments and that in turn set about the idea of two reading this week and not just the one.

When I think of the growing sense of unease that many are feeling, being unable to meet up, I would sum things up in church terms saying simply, "We can't have fellowship and miss it dreadfully". When thinking about these things I am often drawn to Psalm 139 where David captures beautifully not only the nature of the human condition but also some of the major attributes of God. When I read Psalm 139 I cannot help but think of Jonah chapter 1 which begins one of the most well known Old Testament stories which has been the subject of much discussion in some academic circles where the views about who Jonah was whether the story was true or a parable, etc goes on. For our purposes this morning it is the story of a man who runs away from God and his Calling to Him. I am sure we have all heard as the song begins,

"Listen to my tale of Jonah and the Whale- Where ?

Way down in the middle of the Ocean."

It in essence, captures the thrust of the thoughts expressed by David when He asks the question "Where Can I go from your Spirit?" (Psalm 139:7) and then explores what Jonah tried to do - to get as far away from God as Possible. It is in these words that we can see an understanding of both the Omnipotence as well as the Omniscience of God. These words are such a treasure for us that that the Prince of Preachers, Charles Haddon Spurgeon referred to Psalm 139," *"One of the most notable of the sacred hymns. It sings the omniscience and omnipresence of God... Like a Pharos, (Lighthouse) this holy song casts a clear light even to the uttermost parts of the sea, and warns its against that practical atheism which ignores the presence of God, and so makes shipwreck of the soul."* (*A Treasury of David*)

Dr EJ Young sees Ps 139 as " one of the grandest of all the Psalms, for it brings us face to face with the majesty and power of God. Immediately it exalts God as all knowing and omnipresent, and clearly shows that all of man's life is in God's hands."

John R W Stott, the Church of England clergyman and scholar sees Ps139 as "the Crown of all Psalms". There are 3 things to see in these words of the Psalmist, King David. The first thing to comprehend is God's capacity to anticipate our thoughts. (Verse 2: *You perceive my thoughts from afar*) The second is to comprehend how God can anticipate our every action, (Verse 3: *You are familiar with all my ways*) while the third is that we should comprehend that God can anticipate every word we will say, (verse 4: *Before a word is on my tongue you, LORD, know it completely*)

How we think, What we do, and what we say, God already knows. The great attribute of God Almighty to be all knowing (Omniscient). So when we are filled with the sense of negativity that Isolation, or filled with anguish as a result of physical or mental illness, or troubled by the anxieties and pressures that this world has foisted upon us in these quite literally Dark Days, god our father understands our situation fully and his promise to us is the same as was given to Moses and Joshua ("I will never leave You nor forsake you" : 1 Chronicles 28: 20), or in the same way that Jesus in commissioning his disciples said, "*Lo, I am with you always, to the very end of the age.*" (Matthew 20: 28)

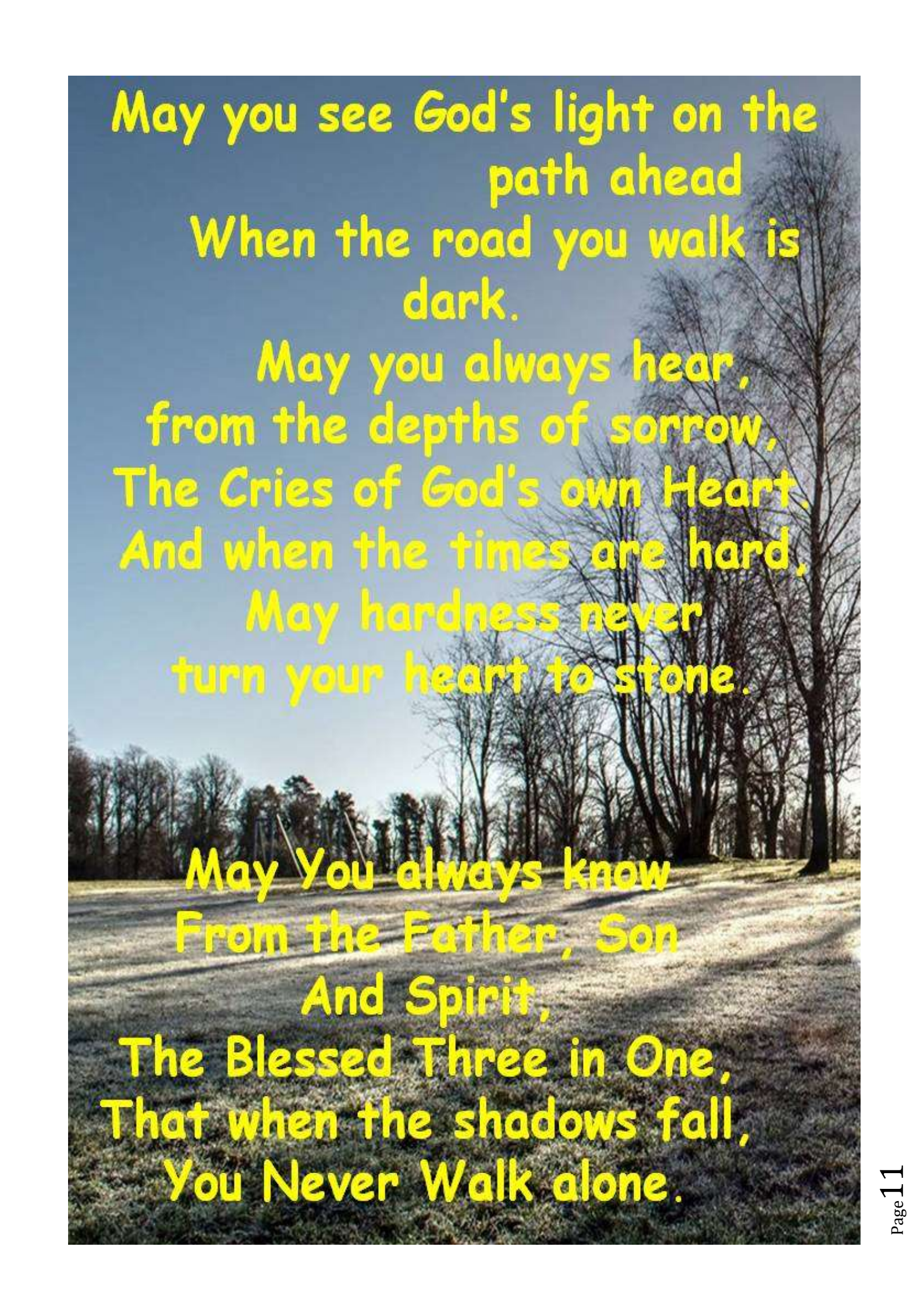
We should hold on to that thought when such feelings of isolation crowd in on us and take the promise of God to heart this day and be encouraged in that promise despite the restrictions and the long month of January.

Great words for us from God's Word to treasure and hold on to as we face the week ahead and all it entails the good and the bad.

Have a great week
Calum

Contacting the Minister

Should you or anyone in your family need my help or advice in anything then please feel free to get in touch either by email (parkhoose@msn.com) or Phonecall on 0141 638 3023.



May you see God's light on the
path ahead
When the road you walk is
dark.

May you always hear,
from the depths of sorrow,
The Cries of God's own Heart,
And when the times are hard,
May hardness never
turn your heart to stone.

May You always know
From the Father, Son
And Spirit,
The Blessed Three in One,
That when the shadows fall,
You Never Walk alone.