

# Ash Wednesday Prayer Meeting

8.00pm, 17 February 2021

Join online using the Zoom app,  
using only one device per household.

Meeting ID: 998 4672 0205

Passcode: 163924

Or by phone: 0330 088 5830

Let us now call to mind our sin  
and the infinite mercy of God:

God the Father,  
**have mercy upon us.**

God the Son,  
**have mercy upon us.**

God the Holy Spirit,  
**have mercy upon us.**

From all evil and mischief;  
from pride, vanity, and  
hypocrisy;  
from envy, hatred, and malice;  
and from all evil intent,  
**good Lord, deliver us.**

From sloth, worldliness and  
love of money;  
from hardness of heart  
and contempt for your word  
and your laws,  
**good Lord, deliver us**

From sins of body and mind;  
from the deceits of the world,  
the flesh and the devil,  
**good Lord, deliver us.**

In all times of sorrow;  
in all times of joy;  
in the hour of death,  
and at the day of judgement,  
**good Lord, deliver us.**

By the mystery of your holy  
incarnation;  
by your birth, childhood and  
obedience;  
by your baptism, fasting and  
temptation,  
**good Lord, deliver us.**

By your ministry in word  
and work;  
by your mighty acts of power;  
and by your preaching of the  
kingdom,  
**good Lord, deliver us**

By your agony and trial;  
by your cross and passion;  
and by your precious death and  
burial,  
**good Lord, deliver us.**

By your mighty resurrection;  
by your glorious ascension;  
and by your sending of the Holy  
Spirit,  
**good Lord, deliver us.**

Give us true repentance;  
forgive us our sins of negligence  
and ignorance  
and our deliberate sins;  
and grant us the grace  
of your Holy Spirit  
to amend our lives  
according to your holy word.  
**Holy God,  
holy and strong,  
holy and immortal,  
have mercy upon us. Amen.**

**“Lament is a divinely-given invitation to pour out our fears, frustrations, and sorrows  
for the purpose of helping us to renew our confidence in God.”** Mark Vroegop \*

## Psalm 13

from the English Standard Version

- <sup>1</sup> How long, O LORD? Will you forget me for ever?  
How long will you hide your face from me?
- <sup>2</sup> How long must I take counsel in my soul  
and have sorrow in my heart all the day?  
How long shall my enemy be exalted over me?
- <sup>3</sup> Consider and answer me, O LORD my God;  
light up my eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of death,
- <sup>4</sup> lest my enemy say, “I have prevailed over him”,  
lest my foes rejoice because I am shaken.
- <sup>5</sup> But I have trusted in your steadfast love;  
my heart shall rejoice in your salvation.
- <sup>6</sup> I will sing to the LORD,  
because he has dealt bountifully with me.

## How Long, O Lord?

From ‘Tumbling Sky’ by Matt Searles © 2016

How long, O Lord, will you forget me?  
How long, O Lord, will you hide your face away?  
How long, O Lord, must anxious thoughts arise in me?  
And all the day have sorrow in my heart?

Consider me – give me an answer Lord;  
Light up my eyes, or my soul will sleep in death.  
My enemies threaten me on ev’ry side  
And they rejoice every time I fall.

But I will trust your steadfast love;  
Your grace and mercy shown to me.  
My soul will sing to you, my Lord,  
For I know you have been good to me

## Lament: Turning to God and bringing our burdens

"Choosing to talk to God about what is happening. More than a sinful rehearsing of our anger, biblical lament humbly and honestly identifies the pain, questions, and frustrations raging in our souls." \*

*"How long, O LORD? Will you forget me for ever?"*

- Brokenness of the world – suffering and injustice, oppression and pain
- Sorrow for loss – grief and mourning, despair and hopelessness, unanswered questions
- Hurts and offences – unfaithfulness and betrayal, disappointment and frustration
- Torments – cruelty and harassment, fear and anxiety, wilderness experiences
- Weight of sin – hardness of heart and rejection of God, foolishness and pride

## Lament: Asking boldly for help

"Seeking God's help while in pain is an act of faith. Unremitting sorrow can create a deadly silence as we give in to despair ('there's no hope') or denial ('everything's fine'). But lament invites us to dare to hope in God's promises as we ask for his help." \*

*"Consider and answer me, O LORD my God."*

- Rejoice that God's sovereignty is total and his promises are true
- Remember God's faithfulness – to Israel, to Jesus, to us
- Pray for peace in turmoil, comfort in pain, patience in suffering
- Pray for an eternal perspective, especially when present difficulties seem overwhelming
- Ask that God would use our individual situations to form us into the likeness of Jesus

## Lament: Choosing to trust

"This is the destination for our laments; all roads lead here. This prayer language moves us to renew our commitment to trust in God as we navigate the brokenness of life." \*

*"But I have trusted in your steadfast love..."*

- Deliberately choosing to "labour on in weakness and rejoicing" whatever our circumstances
- That God would help us live by the 'manna principle': trusting his provision one day at a time
- Remember the tomb is empty and Jesus is alive – we are 'Easter people', even as we live in 'Lent'
- Relying on God as much for our spiritual health as our physical wellbeing
- Trusting the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, will help us bring Christ's eternal comfort to the least, the last, the lost and the lonely in our community

### Isaiah 61:1-3

from the NIV

The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me, because the LORD has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners, to proclaim the year of the LORD's favour and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn, and provide for those who grieve in Zion — to bestow on them a **crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of joy instead of mourning**, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair. They will be called oaks of righteousness, a planting of the LORD for the display of his splendour.

May Christ give us grace to grow in holiness,  
to deny ourselves, take up our cross, and follow him;  
and the blessing of God almighty,  
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,  
be among us and remain with us always. **Amen**

