

Lectionary readings: Isaiah 55: 1-9; Psalm 63: 1-8; 1 Corinthians 10: 1-13; Luke 13: 1-9 (Third in Lent)

For reflection and prayer

- **Isaiah 55:** *'Listen carefully to my life-giving, life-nourishing words.'* (v3) *'Come back to God, who is merciful; come back to our God, who is lavish with forgiveness.'* (v7 The Message) God in His extravagant love invites us to a feast. We find it difficult to believe in God's generous love perhaps because it is so different from our experiences in the world where we have to work to earn everything. Perhaps this shows that we have made God in our own image forgetting that God's ways are not our ways. God has given Himself to us in His life-giving, life-nourishing Presence within us so let's feast from the abundance of His loving Presence.
- **Psalm 63:** The Psalmist says he is thirsting for God like someone in the desert thirsting for water. Is this how we long for God? Do we know how much God loves us? Are we aware of the spiritual feast that God makes available to us every moment of every day? Are we awakening all the life-giving, life-nourishing energies that are within us? Or are we plodding along, making heavy weather of life, not open to God's life-giving Presence within us? Do we meditate on God during the night when we can't sleep? Let's reflect on our relationship with God this week and open ourselves more and more to His life-giving presence.
- **1 Corinthians 10:** Despite God's wonderful provision for the Israelites in the wilderness, they frequently allowed themselves to be overcome by temptation during the tough times. They thought they were secure

because they were God's chosen ones. The warning Paul gives to the Corinthians is for us too: *'If you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall.'* We are responsible for the choices we make and must face up to the consequences of our choices. Let's seek to live in God's ways. Here is a prayer for us as we continue our journey of faith: *Lord, open my life to Your leading. Open my lips to Your truth. Open my eyes to Your presence. Open my ears to Your voice. Open my mind to Your word. Open my heart to Your love.'*

- **Luke 13:** Innocent people suffering as a result of wrong or evil choices human beings make, or because of disasters that happen - we see this happening all around us. What do we make of it all? Do such things cause us to turn to God? Or do they cause us to question His existence? Jesus faces His questioners with their mortality. We are not going to live for ever. Jesus challenges us to respond to God's generous love (in the parable of the fig tree) before it's too late, late in the sense that, if we go on shutting our hearts to God, we may well become immune to His gracious love and mercy. God has planted each one of us in this world and He expects to find fruit in us. Are the choices we make helping us to become the people God created us to be? Are our lives rich with the fruit that God is offering to us - love, joy, peace, faith, hope, grace, forgiveness, mercy - in other words, the things that characterise God? Or are we so steeped in the world that our lives are spiritually bankrupt? God is calling us to open our hearts to Him and respond to His generous invitation to come to Him and drink the 'living water' of His presence. That's something we might like to reflect on this week.