

Lectionary readings: Lamentations 1: 1-6; Psalm 37: 1-9; 2 Timothy 1: 1-14; Luke 17: 5-10

For reflection and prayer

- **Lamentations 1:** Jeremiah is mourning the destruction of Jerusalem and the people being taken captive and carried off into exile in Babylon. Their suffering is the consequence of the choices they have made - going their own way and refusing to live as God wanted them to. Suffering is an inevitable part of being human. No one is exempt from suffering. And, sadly, we bring a lot of suffering upon ourselves by living selfishly and making bad choices. People say, 'Where is God in all of this?' And the truth is that He is right there suffering with those who are suffering and comforting those whose hearts are breaking, His own heart breaking at the way we human beings choose to behave towards one another. This is the price we pay for human freedom. God loves every human being. And God meets us right where we are. *'Where you are, however unchosen, is the place of blessing. How you are, however broken, is the place of grace. Who you are, in your Becoming, is your place in the Kingdom.'* (Margaret Silf)
- **Psalm 37:** A few verses touched me in Psalms for Praying. *'Take delight in the Beloved; enjoy the bountiful gifts of Love.... Commit your life to the Beloved, confident that Love will act on your behalf.... Be still before the Beloved, and wait patiently in the silence.... Those who live in harmony shall know peace, assurance, gratitude and love.'*
- **2 Timothy 1:** Prayer was very important in the life of Paul and needs to be in our lives too. This is something that we might reflect on this week - What part does prayer play in my life and in the life of our congregation? Paul says to Timothy, and so also to us, *'Fan into flames the spiritual gift God gave you.'* We have all been given the gift of faith, but it won't grow if we don't work at it and keep the flame burning. This week we might like to reflect on how we can keep our faith alive, how we can set it on fire even, and so work more assiduously with God to build His Kingdom of love here on earth.
- **Luke 17:** The disciples probably sensed a difficult time ahead and felt they needed more faith to cope with what lay before them. But Jesus reminds them, and us, that the amount of our faith is not important; it is a living faith that counts. So long as our faith is alive, and so long as we are taking steps to ensure that it remains alive and growing, then it will enable us to remove mountains of difficulties. Faith is being willing to put ourselves into God's hands and let Him lead us in our journey through life. Faith is being aware of God's presence in the depth of our being. Faith is opening ourselves to and unleashing the divine power of God which is already present within us through God's Spirit. So this week let's not allow the Spirit of God to lie dormant within us. Let's open up our heart and life to God and let Him energise us in new ways. And let God surprise us with His power - power to love, power to forgive, power to be set free and to set others free, power to change and be transformed more and more into His image and likeness which is His will for us and for His world.