

Prayer ~ Sunday 7th February 2021

No 1003

Lectionary readings: Isaiah 40: 21-31; Psalm 147: 1-11, 20c;  
1 Corinthians 9: 16-23; Mark 1: 29-39

### For reflection and prayer

- **Isaiah 40:** Isaiah reminds us that God is all-powerful. And, if we have eyes to see, the whole universe, His creation, reveals His presence. We think we are the centre of the universe and God is present to do our bidding, but this reveals a total misunderstanding of who God is; in fact, it is making God in our own image. And yet, God strengthens us when we get tired and worn out, if we wait on Him in stillness, opening ourselves to the wonder of who He is. So let's this week humble ourselves before God, recognising that He is far beyond our imagining and understanding, and be filled with awe and wonder.
- **Psalm 147:** *'How good it is to sing praises to our God.'* (v1) *'He delights in those who put their hope in his unfailing love.'* (v11) Is this how we see God - a God of unfailing love? *'The Lord heals the broken-hearted.'* (v3) Have we allowed God to heal our inner hurts and wounds? Here is another rendering of v1 in 'Psalms Now': *How good it is to celebrate God's presence and to sing His praises throughout each day.'* Let's go through each day this week celebrating God's presence and singing His praises.
- **1 Corinthians 9:** Paul exists for only one purpose - to preach the Gospel. So he mixes with a wide range of people - religious, non-religious, those with strict moral codes and those with none, those who are oppressed, overwhelmed by life. Paul identifies with them all,

trying to see things as they see them, trying to walk in their shoes, so that he can share with them the hope that he feels, the inner transformation he has experienced. This is what we are called to do - to get alongside people, without criticism or judgement, accepting them as they are, trying to understand them, listening to their story, their pain, and sharing with them how God wants to transform our lives and make us whole. Quite a challenge! Are we up to it?

- **Mark 1:** Jesus knows His purpose in life is to preach the Gospel - not in the narrow way that we tend to think of preaching, but letting His whole life, words and actions, reveal God's presence, God's life, God's power. He knew that, in order to let His whole life speak for God, He had to spend time in prayer. Surely it was because He was in a close, intimate relationship with the Father that He was able to have a life-changing effect on people's lives. He wants us to follow His example. Jesus wants to heal us of our busy-ness, our restlessness. He wants us to seek out times of stillness and quiet, of prayer and meditation. Let's make it our goal this week to seek out places of peace and calm each day, so that we can spend time with God, allowing Him to renew us, to strengthen us, to heal us, to inspire us to be fired with the same purpose as Jesus had, and let our whole lives speak of God so that through us God can bring healing and wholeness to others.

### A prayer

Lord Jesus, may we learn from You when to be available to the needs of others, and when to step aside to spend time with You, listening to You in the silence and opening ourselves to Your Spirit so that we are energised with Your life. May our whole lives be fragrant with Your presence. Amen.