

**Weekly Devotions  
South Holburn Church  
1st February 2022**

## READINGS

In God, whose word I praise,  
in the LORD, whose word I praise--  
in God I trust; I will not be afraid.  
What can anyone do to me?  
I am under vows to you, O God;  
I will present my thank offerings to you.  
For you have delivered me from death  
and my feet from stumbling,  
that I may walk before God  
in the light of life.

*Psalm 56:10-13*

Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.  
This is what the ancients were commended for ...

... and what more shall I say? I do not have time to tell about Gideon, Barak, Samson and Jephthah, about David and Samuel and the prophets, who through faith conquered kingdoms, administered justice, and gained what was promised; who shut the mouths of lions, quenched the fury of the flames, and escaped the edge of the sword; whose weakness was turned to strength; and who became powerful in battle and routed foreign armies. Women received back their dead, raised to life again. There were others who were tortured, refusing to be released so that they might gain an even better resurrection. Some faced jeers and flogging, and even chains and imprisonment. They were put to death by stoning; they were sawed in two; they were killed by the sword. They went about in sheepskins and goatskins, destitute, persecuted and mistreated—the world was not worthy of them. They wandered in deserts and mountains, living in caves and in holes in the ground.

Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.

*Hebrews 11:1-2, 32-38, - 12:3*

## REFLECTION

I find that I have to keep reminding myself that the Christian faith is not that complicated! Our Christian faith is not about theology or deep understanding. These things come as the dressing of faith, born out of the experience of living that faith in the world. At its heart, you do not need any qualifications to live as a Christian! You don't need to understand the meaning of life, the universe and everything! You don't need to have memorized the entire words of Scripture. You don't need to understand all the theological words and concepts that proliferate within the universities and colleges that teach the faith.

Christian faith is simple. It is not beyond anyone. All we are asked to do is to trust God. But, I mean *really* trust God. To feel able to turn to God in every situation. To set our eyes and all our intentions towards God. To trust in God's will and purpose and work in all we do.

This came home to in the most powerful way some years ago. While on placement as a student minister, I met one of those people who affect you deeply. His name was Michael. He had the deepest level of faith I have ever seen. Michael seemed to know that whatever happened he could trust God. And he did. From the moment he got up to the moment he lay down, Michael trusted God.

I met Michael at Woodlands, he was a young man with profound special needs. Most people would not have thought Michael capable of much. In fact, most would walk past on the other side of the road if they saw Michael coming towards them in his motorised wheelchair. Yet this young man, who had difficulties beyond my understanding, had the strongest faith you can imagine.

Michael wanted to take part in one of the church services at Woodlands, and the chaplain invited him to speak. It was not easy for him, but Michael told everyone "God loves me, and I love God". And no one in the service doubted him for a second, because it shone from his face, and sounded in his voice. And his words were a more powerful witness to God than all the words of any sermon.

A simple faith, but not a weak faith! For simple faith does not mean a faith that will falter at the first test. It is the opposite, a faith that holds fast and holds true, no matter what. That is our faith! God loves me and I love God.

Our faith is being willing to trust God, even with the most valuable parts of our lives. It is being willing to commit to God, even when that means we will not always know exactly what lies ahead. It means being willing to live for God, even when that costs us.

Living through the times that we have experienced in this last two years has been challenging. But as people of faith we have a hope, even in the darkest times, that we are still loved by God, that God is still with us.

These are also difficult times for the Church, as we face change and challenge, but as frightening as these days may seem, still we are loved by God and still God is with us. And therefore, we live with hope.

May it be that God blesses you with a simple faith, a faith blessed with the deepest love and the strongest hope.

Amen.

## **PRAYER**

Lord God,  
Teach us again what it means to have faith in you,  
Show us how to simply trust in you in all situations and at all times.  
And let our trust and experience of you grow every day.

Enable us to bear witness to you, loving God,  
In how we live our lives every day.  
Teach us to trust you, Mighty Lord, to do your will,  
And bring your peace, your love, your hope and your blessing all around us.

In the name of Jesus  
Amen

