

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

**READINGS**

Let love and faithfulness never leave you;  
bind them around your neck,  
write them on the tablet of your heart.  
Then you will win favour and a good name  
in the sight of God and all the people.  
Trust in the LORD with all your heart  
and lean not on your own understanding;  
in all your ways submit to him,  
and he will make your paths straight.

*Proverbs 3:3-6*

Then Daniel praised the God of heaven and said:  
"Praise be to the name of God for ever and ever;  
wisdom and power are his.  
He changes times and seasons;  
he sets up kings and deposes them.  
He gives wisdom to the wise  
and knowledge to the discerning.  
He reveals deep and hidden things;  
he knows what lies in darkness,  
and light dwells with him.  
I thank and praise you, O God of my fathers:  
You have given me wisdom and power,  
you have made known to me what we asked of you."

*Daniel 2:19-23*

Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

*Romans 12:1-2*

## REFLECTION

One of the saddest times in the history of God's people was the exile. Israel was a broken nation, defeated in battle by King Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonian army. The brightest and best of Israel's people were taken in exile as slaves to a foreign land.

Those carried away found themselves in an alien culture, in a way of life they did not know or understand, homesick and longing for family and faith. How could they survive in a such a world? How could they keep the faith? Was this the end of God's people?

Daniel was one of those carried off in captivity. He was bright and talented and was press-ganged into service in the king's court. He and his friends, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, excelled in the work of the royal court, proving themselves to be invaluable advisers to the king.

But Daniel soon found himself in danger. The king had a dream which disturbed him greatly. He wanted it interpreted. So, he called his advisors together, including Daniel and his friends, and told them to tell him the meaning of the dream, otherwise they would be killed. So, no pressure then!

I'm not sure what the other advisors did, but Daniel went away and prayed. He submitted himself to God and listened for God's word. And God did an amazing thing - Daniel understood what the king's dream meant. It was a message from God to the king and all the people.

Daniel had no special skills in interpreting dreams! He was not something he had ever done before. But he simply trusted in God, sought God's way, and found God to be faithful. And after the king praised him, Daniel didn't forget God. Instead, he offered the words of praise we have in our reading this week. Daniel continued to be faithful to God, even in captivity, even when it put him in danger, and always he found that God was faithful and able to guide.

We also have times when we face challenges. When we don't know which way to turn. At times it feels as we too are living in a foreign land and we wonder how our faith will survive. How do we live our faith in the world today? How, as Christians, do we live our faith as we all deal with the aftermath of the pandemic? How can we offer a Christian message of hope in the face of the awful events unfurling in Ukraine?

In the face of such questions, it is difficult to know how to respond. Its hard to know what we can do to make a difference. We feel so inadequate. But one thing we can do is turn to God in prayer, as Daniel did. And we will find, just like Daniel, that God responds and leads, and, through faithful followers, God makes a difference.

In face of the problems before him Daniel found that God was close, and we will find the same. God is with us.

Amen

## PRAYER

Lord God,  
Ever faithful,  
You who meets our need  
And responds to our cries,  
With bounteous blessings.

Like Daniel,  
we praise you,  
Because you have answered our prayers,  
you have responded to our needs.

Lord we know now that you have plans for us,  
That you have more for us to do,  
That you still have a message to proclaim through us,  
So lead us,  
and in our hearts, inspire us.

Make the next step in your vision clear to each of us,  
that we might speak with love and Christian hope in all the world around us.

In the name of Jesus  
Amen

