

*“Take heart, you seekers after God. For the Lord listens to the poor and does not despise his captive people.” (Psalm 69: 32, 33).*

Today's reading for your perusal are: Psalm 86: 1-10 & 16-17, Romans 6: 1b-11 & Matthew 10: 24-39.

### **THOUGHT FOR THE DAY – GOD LISTENS**

Have you ever bent over to let a child whisper something in your ear? God does this for us – He inclines His ear to hear our every cry. If you have ever felt that no one is listening to you, take heart; God hears every one of your prayers, and He will be faithful to answer them. That is why we find the Psalmist praying earnestly to God for His help. The Psalmist is crying out to God through his prayers because he is being attacked by his enemies, what we don't know if this is him being physically attacked or spiritually, all we know is he is scared and so does the right thing he turns towards God. We of course can relate to this both physically and spiritually for the Psalm can and does refer to both options. <sup>1</sup> *86 Listen to me, LORD, and answer me, for I am helpless and weak.* <sup>2</sup> *Save me from death, because I am loyal to you; save me, for I am your servant and I trust in you.* <sup>3</sup> *You are my God, so be merciful to me; I pray to you all day long.* <sup>4</sup> *Make your servant glad, O Lord, because my prayers go up to you.* <sup>5</sup> *You are good to us and forgiving, full of constant love for all who pray to you.* <sup>6</sup> *Listen, LORD, to my prayer; hear my cries for help.* <sup>7</sup> *I call to you in times of trouble, because you answer my prayers.* My study Bible states: The enemies (King David may either be those within the kingdom who refuse to acknowledge him as the Lord's anointed, or foreign powers that are attempting to remove him from the international scene). This sounds highly familiar to the modern-day Christian, aren't the media and the secularists in our society trying to remove Christianity and its moral influence from all walks of life, aren't Christians under spiritual attack more now than before?

Yet the Bible teaches us that as men and women of faith we are not to fear, instead we are to remain faithful through our trials, this is what is required, why? God has chosen us to be His servants so He will look after us. All we must do is trust in Him as the Psalmist clearly does. In other words, when we struggle, we take it to God in prayer, why? Because out of His kindness and love, God answers prayers. Why does David and every Christian since the time of Jesus go to God in prayer – it is because He is the one and only true God, no other god or gods acts with such sovereign power, because they are all false gods and are useless. Only the living God can help us, but we must trust in Him and walk with Him if we are to achieve in life.

<sup>8</sup> *There is no god like you, O Lord, not one has done what you have done.*

<sup>9</sup> *All the nations that you have created will come and bow down to you; they will praise your greatness.* <sup>10</sup> *You are mighty and do wonderful things; you alone are God.*

The Psalmist then carries on and says:<sup>16</sup> *Turn to me and have mercy on me; strengthen me and save me, because I serve you just as my mother did.* <sup>17</sup> *Show me proof of your goodness, LORD; those who hate me will be ashamed when they see that you have given me comfort and help.*

*Strengthen me Lord as I am a child of your handmaid* – my mother and my father were strong people of faith, so I had very good role models to look up to in my life – we no doubt have similar experiences and these men and women of strong faith are an inspiration for us to focus on God, knowing He looks after us and cares for us so much that he died on a Cross at Calvary to redeem us all. He heard all the people's prayers and decided to act in such a way as to redeem lost humanity, fortunately many heeded Him and were and are still being saved today through hearing the Gospel message of hope.

<sup>6</sup> *What shall we say, then? Should we continue to live in sin so that God's grace will increase?* <sup>2</sup> *Certainly not! We have died to sin—how then can we go on living in it?* <sup>3</sup> *For surely you know that when we were baptized into union with Christ Jesus, we were baptized into union with his death.*

<sup>4</sup> *By our baptism, then, we were buried with him and shared his death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from death by the glorious power of the Father, so also we might live a new life.* Paul is explaining to us in his letter to the Roman Christians how God has provided for our

redemption and justification (the act of showing something to be right). This means we are free from the power of sin over our lives due to Christ's death and glorious resurrection, it is this that has made it right, right because Christ died so we that we can live. Paul is teaching us in the bible here that it is through our faith and trust in Jesus Christ as our Lord and Saviour that we have been freed from the hold of sin in our lives. This again gives the Christian hope.

Baptism normally followed a conversion; this is when someone accepted Christ as their Lord and Saviour and once, they made this testament they then were baptised to show to those around them that they have been born again. It was a means of showing to the people that the man or woman has turned their live around and has embraced a new beginning. It doesn't mean their situation in life has changed but inwardly the soul has changed, he or she is now a new person in Christ and that allows the believer to move forward in their live with a fresh outlook which can help better their lives and the lives of those around them. <sup>5</sup> *For since we have become one with him in dying as he did, in the same way we shall be one with him by being raised to life as he was.*

<sup>6</sup> *And we know that our old being has been put to death with Christ on his cross, in order that the power of the sinful self might be destroyed, so that we should no longer be the slaves of sin.* <sup>7</sup> *For when we die, we are set free from the power of sin.* <sup>8</sup> *Since we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him.* <sup>9</sup> *For we know that Christ has been raised from death and will never die again—death will no longer rule over him.* <sup>10</sup> *And so, because he died, sin has no power over him; and now he lives his life in fellowship with God.* <sup>11</sup> *In the same way you are to think of yourselves as dead, so far as sin is concerned, but living in fellowship with God through Christ Jesus.*

As Christian's we are to follow Jesus' example and teachings, this is hard going in today's modern liberal, anything goes world. This means that we must not have the attitude that many have in our modernday world, the attitude of being better than others. Jesus warned us of this: <sup>24</sup> *"No pupil is greater than his teacher; no slave is greater than his master.* <sup>25</sup> *So a pupil should be satisfied to become like his teacher, and a slave like his master. If the*

head of the family is called Beelzebul, the members of the family will be called even worse names! We as Christians are called many nasty names because we do not conform to the ways of the world and follow whatever is the current fashion or fad. But Jesus tells us: <sup>26</sup> *“So do not be afraid of people. Whatever is now covered up will be uncovered, and every secret will be made known.”* <sup>27</sup> *What I am telling you in the dark you must repeat in broad daylight, and what you have heard in private you must announce from the housetops.* <sup>28</sup> *Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; rather be afraid of God, who can destroy both body and soul in hell.* The Bible teaches us that our true self - that is our body and soul are closely related in this life but are separated at death and then reunited at the resurrection. This means that the false teachings of this world will be uncovered, and the Gospel message must be openly declared and taught so people can be brought to salvation. That means standing up for Christ in this ungodly, selfish world, it means ignoring the ungodly around us, those who listen to the teachings of the world that they want to hear but we are not to fear what society thinks of us, what friends and family thinks of us, we should only fear what God thinks of us. God, He alone determines the final destiny of us all, heaven or hell. <sup>32</sup> *“Those who declare publicly that they belong to me, I will do the same for them before my Father in heaven.”* <sup>33</sup> *But those who reject me publicly, I will reject before my Father in heaven.*

Jesus knew that His message of salvation would find trouble in the world because it goes against the ways of the world. <sup>34</sup> *“Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the world. No, I did not come to bring peace, but a sword.”* <sup>35</sup> *I came to set sons against their fathers, daughters against their mothers, daughters-in-law against their mothers-in-law;* <sup>36</sup> *your worst enemies will be the members of your own family.*

It seems strange and sounds contradictory for Jesus to talk about bringing a sword. It is true that Christ came to bring peace – peace between the believer and God, and peace among men. Yet the inevitable result of Christ’s coming is conflict – between Christ and the antichrist, between light and darkness, between Christ’s children and the devil’s children. As we all know only too well this conflict can occur even between members of the

same family but <sup>38</sup> ***Those who do not take up their cross and follow in my steps are not fit to be my disciples.*** <sup>39</sup> *Those who try to gain their own life will lose it [fit in with society]; but those who lose their life for my sake will gain it.* Living in the ways of the world leads to death, but living in the ways of Christ leads to life eternal, what will you choose?

## PRAYER

Heavenly Father too many people around us today live in fear, fear of Covid 19 but at the same time too many people live in fear of not fitting in. They cry out in desperation for you to help them fit in but do not believe in Jesus or You, and they then get angry and say that you do not exist because of their unbelieving hearts cannot allow them to accept that you are there for them if only they would listen.

Father hear our prayers for those who do not believe and who are wandering around aimlessly fearful of life. You have blessed us with the blood of Christ, for it is His shed blood on the Cross of Calvary that has washed us clean of our sins and our fears. Help us today Lord to seek you forgiveness for our wrong doings, help us to confess to you our feelings and fears and save us, we pray in Jesus Name.

Lord Jesus you came so that we may live. You came to save us from ourselves, helps us now to pray for those who we know today who are struggling physically, emotionally and spiritually, and as we give you them their names, we ask you to go to them and heal them body, mind and soul. Help us Lord to pray for those around us, guide us with he Holy Spirit so that we will be aware of the needs around us so that we then can pray to you.

In Jesus name we ask that you bless and look after our key workers, for all those who work in the hospitals and care homes, for the police and other emergency workers, the shopkeepers and the men and woman who provide us with food, heat and light. Bless our families and our dear friends who we struggle to see because of Covid 19. Keep them safe we pray and help us to remain strong in you so that we can pray continually for others, for healing and for wisdom so that things will pass quickly and we can all be united again. Give wisdom we pray to the leaders of our governments and help them make wise decisions that helps our country and the people of our country. Bring us unity in and through your Word we pray and help us as Christians to bring blessings to those we meet. Amen.