

Reflection Wednesday 24th March

Jeremiah 30:18-22

Thus says the Lord:

I am going to restore the fortunes of the tents of Jacob,
and have compassion on his dwellings;
the city shall be rebuilt upon its mound,
and the citadel set on its rightful site.

Out of them shall come thanksgiving,
and the sound of merrymakers.

I will make them many, and they shall not be few;
I will make them honoured, and they shall not be disdained.

Their children shall be as of old,
their congregation shall be established before me;
and I will punish all who oppress them.

Their prince shall be one of their own,
their ruler shall come from their midst;

I will bring him near, and he shall approach me,
for who would otherwise dare to approach me?

says the Lord.

And you shall be my people,
and I will be your God.

To have true compassion is a great gift. Compassion is the name of a charity that many support. Through the sponsoring of a child elsewhere in the world, praying for that child and entering into correspondence with that child can make a huge difference not just to the child's life but to the family and through the local projects a huge difference can be made to the wider community.

The Greek word which we translate Compassion is "splagchnizomai" – the first part of the word "Splagnchna" means internal organs so splagchnizomai literally to be moved so deeply by something that you feel it in the pit of your stomach. This is the word Jesus used in the parable of the Prodigal Son.

We have a God who is deeply moved by that which he sees where people are suffering. He looks at his people in their time of exile and promises to them that their time in exile will end, they will return to their own land and have autonomy as a nation once more. They were to be a growing nation respected and not despised self-ruled and would have a ruler who would draw the people back to God.

This passage could be reflected upon in many ways.

As we look at the world today and through history. There are many peoples who have been or are seeking freedom and self-rule; many wanting respect from neighbouring countries.

The difference though can be in the nature of the leader. Is the leader one who seeks to draw the people back to God or leads for personal satisfaction and power?

In Jesus we have the Lord of Lords and King of Kings of a different form of Kingdom, God's Kingdom. Jesus is the one who is ruler of a kingdom and one who desires to draw the citizens of the Kingdom ever close to God.

Jeremiah prophesied a ruler who would "come from their midst", that is Jesus the fully human King of Kings and fully Divine being at the same time. It is only one such being who can bring unity between humanity and God, creation and Creator.

In Jesus we have one who knows what human life is like and has splagchnizomai on his people. Not a tender gentle love, but a gut wrenching, heart felt, and pain-enduring commitment to his creation. He who would go to the cross, held to it by love more than nails.

As we continue our way towards Holy Week let us be on the look out for signs of God's compassion and his call on us to be compassionate, life-changing people to.