

CANON MARK'S DAILY DEVOTIONALS #297 23RD – 27TH MARCH 2026

MONDAY

Yesterday we celebrated one of our members 100th birthday. A life full of remarkable encouragement and in joy of the Lord having an impact on all those she sees. Thank you, Lord for Eileen, and a very happy birthday to her. Praise the lord! - IN A WORLD WHERE OUR WORRIES OFTEN LOOM LARGER THAN ANYTHING ELSE, THIS REFLECTION INVITES US TO LOOK BEYOND WHAT'S RIGHT IN FRONT OF US AND REMEMBER THE DEEPER STORY GOD IS QUIETLY WRITING.

23rd March – Morning all... Have you ever found yourself looking at something in your life and thinking, this is all I can see right now? The problem, the uncertainty, the thing that hasn't worked out, it sits right in front of you and fills your vision. And when that happens, it's very easy to believe that what's in front of you is the whole story. That's why Paul's words feel so important. He writes: "So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal." (2 Corinthians 4:18) Paul isn't pretending the visible things don't matter. He knows they do. But he is reminding us that they aren't permanent. The difficulty we see, the worry we feel, the unanswered question, they're real, but they're not the final word. There's more going on than we can always see. The challenge, of course, is that the "seen" things are loud. They show up in our conversations, our plans, our thoughts when we wake up in the night. Meanwhile, the "unseen" hope, faith, God quietly at work can feel much more distant. Yet often, it's in those unseen places that God is doing His deepest work. It brings to mind a line from C. S. Lewis: "You can't go back and change the beginning, but you can start where you are and change the ending." That's a gentle reminder that the present moment isn't the end of the story. What we see today may feel stuck, but God is still shaping what comes next. Lent helps us remember this. The cross, on that first Good Friday, looked like everything had fallen apart. It looked like defeat. It looked like hope had gone. But what no one could see was that God was bringing life out of death and victory out of loss. So, if today feels heavy, or if all you can see is the problem in front of you, try to lift your eyes a little. Not to ignore what's real, but to remember it isn't everything. Because what's seen is temporary... but what God is doing even quietly, even slowly, lasts forever.

Revd Canon Mark Spiers

TUESDAY

SADLY, WE HAD NEWS THIS AFTERNOON OF DANIEL'S NAN, DOT, PASSING AWAY. ALTHOUGH SHE HAD BEEN REALLY POORLY, IT WAS STILL UNEXPECTED. PLEASE HOLD DANIEL AND ALL THE FAMILY IN YOUR PRAYERS. DANIEL WAS VERY CLOSE TO HIS NAN - HE LOOKED FORWARD TO THE NIGHTLY TEXTS THAT SIMPLY SAID, 'GOOD NIGHT, LOVE YOU.'

24th March – Morning all... Have you ever noticed how quickly your mood can change depending on what someone says to you? You can start the day feeling fine, steady, even hopeful... and then one comment lands. Sometimes it's not even meant harshly, but it sticks. It replays in your mind. Before long, it begins to shape how you see yourself, your day, even your confidence. On the other hand, a kind word can do the opposite. Someone encourages you, thanks you, notices something small and suddenly things feel lighter. It's amazing, really, how much weight we can give to the voices around us. That's why these words feel so grounding: "The Lord is my light and my salvation - whom shall I fear?" (Psalm 27:1) David is honest here. He doesn't pretend there aren't other voices, critics, enemies, doubts, fears. But he chooses which voice will define him. He places God's voice above all the others. Holy Week is almost upon us, so now more than ever we are invited to slow down and listen more carefully. To step back from the noise, the expectations, and to tune our ears again to the One who calls us beloved. His voice brings light. His voice brings reassurance. His voice reminds us who we really are. And when that voice becomes the one we hold onto, something shifts. The harsh words don't disappear, but they lose some of their power. The doubts still whisper, but they don't control the narrative. Because we're walking in a different light now. So today, be careful which voice you carry with you. Carry the one that brings light, not the one that casts shadows. Carry the one that reminds you who you are in God's eyes.

Revd Canon Mark Spiers

WEDNESDAY

TODAY, CANON MARK EXPLAINS THAT SOMETIMES THE MOST MEANINGFUL GROWTH IN OUR LIVES DOESN'T LOOK DRAMATIC AT ALL—IT HAPPENS QUIETLY, IN SMALL, FAITHFUL STEPS THAT GOD IS ALREADY USING FOR SOMETHING GREATER.

25th March – Morning all... Do you ever feel like nothing much is changing, even though you're trying? You're praying, trying to be patient, trying to live differently and yet you still feel stuck. You

look at your life and think, surely I should be further along than this. Today's scripture provides us with the steady encouragement we need, "Do not despise these small beginnings, for the Lord rejoices to see the work begin." (Zechariah 4:10) God doesn't measure progress the way we do. We look for big changes; He celebrates small steps. One prayer whispered when you didn't feel like praying. One moment where you held your tongue instead of reacting. One act of kindness no one else saw. One decision to keep trusting when it would have been easier to give up. Mother Teresa once said, "We can do no great things, only small things with great love." That's deeply comforting. It means we don't need to do something dramatic; we just need to take the next faithful step. Think about how seeds grow. You don't plant one and expect a tree tomorrow. There's time underground unseen, silent, steady. Roots are forming before anything appears above the soil. In the same way, God is often doing His deepest work in the hidden places of your life. Small beginnings, placed in God's hands, always grow.

Revd Canon Mark Spiers

THURSDAY

PSALM 127 VERSE 1 WAS OUR STRAP-LINE FOR THE BUILDING OF OUR CHURCH HALL IN THENYEAR 2000, KNOWING WITH CONFIDENCE THAT IT WAS THE LORD THAT WAS BUILDING HIS HOUSE HERE AT ST ANDREW'S. WE DIDN'T HAVE THE MONEY, WE HAD NO IDEA WHERE IT WOULD COME FROM - BUT THE LORD HONOURED OUR FAITHFULNESS AND HE FOUND EVERY PENNY. PRAISE THE LORD!

26th March – Morning all, have you ever tried to fix something yourself before asking for help? I have to admit my DIY skills are non-existent. Give me a loose screw, a flat-pack box, or something that needs "a quick repair," and I'm already in trouble. I'll still try, though. I'll stare at it, turn it upside down, tighten the wrong thing, and somehow make it worse. Eventually, I step back and think, I probably should have asked someone who actually knows what they're doing. Life can feel like that sometimes. We try to patch things up ourselves, our worries, our pressures, our responsibilities. We keep tightening and adjusting, hoping it will all hold together. But inside, we know we're struggling. Then these words from the Old Testament speak right into that feeling: "Unless the Lord builds the house, the builders labour in vain." (Psalm 127:1) It's a powerful picture. You can work hard. You can try your best. You can put in the effort, but if God isn't at the centre, it can still feel like everything is fragile. And that's when we end up exhausting ourselves, by trying to hold together what we were never meant to carry alone. This verse reminds us that the wisest thing we can do is ask Him to build from the beginning. Because when the Lord builds, you don't have to keep tightening everything in fear. We can trust that what He holds together will stand. And that's reassuring, especially for those of us whose DIY attempts rarely do.

Revd Canon Mark Spiers

FRIDAY

FIND A QUIET PLACE TO SIT AND READ CANON MARK'S DEVOTIONAL FOR TODAY. I PRAY YOU WILL BE AS BLESSED AS I HAVE BEEN BLESSED. AMEN.

27th March – Morning all... Holy Week is almost upon us. It's that sacred time in the Christian calendar when we slow down and walk again through the final days of Jesus' earthly ministry, from celebration to sacrifice, from cheers to the cross, and ultimately to the hope of resurrection. Palm Sunday marks the beginning of that journey. The people were waiting for a King. They longed for power, for freedom, for someone who would overthrow oppression and change everything overnight. And when Jesus entered Jerusalem, the crowds were ready. They waved palm branches, laid down their cloaks, and shouted with excitement: "Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!" (Mark 11:9) But the surprising part wasn't the praise, it was how He came. Not on a war horse. Not surrounded by soldiers. But riding on a humble donkey. It was gentle. Peaceful. Almost understated. Palm Sunday reminds us that God doesn't always work in the dramatic ways we expect. We look for power; He comes with humility. We look for quick answers; He begins a deeper work. The crowd wanted a conquering king, but Jesus came as a servant who would conquer through love. The crowds shouted "Hosanna!" with joy, yet within days many would fall silent as events unfolded in ways they didn't understand. Palm Sunday stands at that turning point, full of praise, yet moving toward the cross. And maybe that speaks to us. There are moments when we welcome Jesus with enthusiasm, but when His path leads through challenge, sacrifice, or waiting, we struggle. We want Him to change our circumstances immediately, but He often comes to change our hearts first. As Holy Week begins, imagine laying something before Him, just as the crowd laid their cloaks on the road. Your worries. Your plans. Your expectations. Your hopes. Place them down and welcome Him in.

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