

“No longer empty, but filled”

By Rev. Frances Savill

March 23, 2025

Readings:

Psalm 63:1-8

We are now half way through the season of Lent.
And let me ask you how is your Lent going?
Has it been a season of contemplation and reflection?
Have you taken time, carved out time in your schedule to pray, and reflect on Jesus' journey to the cross?

This morning you have the chance again to hear the words of the Psalmist as he or she thinks deeply about God.

From the amplified version:

O God, You are my God; with deepest longing I will seek You;

My soul, (my life, my very self) thirsts for You, my flesh longs and sighs for You, in a dry and weary land where there is no water.

The psalmist speaks with a passion and a longing that I don't always have.
I remember that I have had it, and that I should have it, but I don't always.

The Psalmist says:

I have gazed upon you in the sanctuary, to see your power and Your glory.

Because Your lovingkindness is better than life, my lips shall praise you.

So will I bless You as long as I live;

I will lift up my hands in Your name.

My soul, my life, my very self, is satisfied as with marrow and fatness, with a feast, and my mouth offers praises to You with joyful lips.

The Psalmist feasts on God and is satisfied.

I am learning to feast on God, and when I do my soul is satisfied, but if get too busy, or distracted, or for whatever reason turn from God, my soul is not satisfied.

The world around me is troubling and busy.

Demands on every side, big questions without easy answers, the world news feels like madness.

The stuff I have been feasting- watching the news, scrolling on my phone, looking at social media feeds, listening to news, when I feast on the things of the world, it leaves me sorrowing, sad, weary, and wondering.

It's not just social media and the news that leaves me weary, worn and sad, too much work, or too

many people, too much eating and drinking and visiting and games, and fun, anything that will distract, and keep from feasting on Jesus, will not satisfy, no matter how good or fun it is.

But maybe that is not a bad place to begin my prayer in Lent.

I see the world, and I see myself.

Walter Wangerin writes on his reflection about Lent:

"In mirrors I see myself. But in mirrors made of glass and silver I never see the whole of myself. I see the me I want to see, and I ignore the rest. Mirrors that hide nothing hurt me. They reveal an ugliness I'd rather deny. Oh, what a coward I am, and what a fool! Only when I have the courage fully to look, clearly to know myself-even the evil of myself-will I admit my need for healing. My denial of my sin protects, preserves, perpetuates that sin! Ugliness in me, while I live in illusions, can only grow the uglier.

Mirrors that hide nothing hurt me. But this is the hurt of purging and precious renewal- and these are the mirrors of dangerous grace. The passion of Christ, his suffering and his death, is such a mirror.

Lent invites us to look deeply into Jesus' life, his example, his teaching about love of God and love of neighbour, and look deeply into ourselves, to see our ugliness and the ugliness of our world.

Looking into Jesus' betrayal and death, we see the depth of our sin, the evil in us and in our world.

Turning on the news, scrolling through a news feed, the sirens screech and wail, all the many ways our world falls short of the glory of God.

But we see more. Speaking of Jesus as our mirror, he continues:

For this mirror is not made of glass and silver, or of fallen flesh.

This mirror is made of righteous flesh and of divinity, both- and this mirror loves me absolutely. Jesus reflects the squalid truth of my need, but he also reveals the tremendous truth of his grace and forgiveness. He took that sin away.

This mirror of Jesus and the cross is not passive only, showing what is, it is active, creating new things to be. It shows me a new me behind the shadow of a sinner. For when I gaze at his crucifixion, I see my death indeed- but my death done.

We see hope, hope for ourselves and hope for our world.

We see life.

We hear the words; “Father forgive” and see a love that overcomes evil, that is stronger than our hate, and that triumphs over death by death, giving new life.

In seeing the truth of my sin, and the sin of our world, I see the need for a Saviour.

And seeing Jesus willingly going to the cross for me, for us, for our world, the love of God poured out for us, I am again filled with wonder, joy and gratitude and hope.

My soul begins to pick up the strains of the psalmist

—

O God, You are my God; with deepest longing I will seek You;

My soul, (my life, my very self) thirsts for You, my flesh longs and sighs for You, in a dry and weary land where there is no water.

I have gazed upon you in the sanctuary, to see your power and Your glory.

Because Your lovingkindness is better than life, my lips shall praise you.

So will I bless You as long as I live;

I will lift up my hands in Your name.

My soul, my life, my very self, is satisfied as with marrow and fatness, with a feast, and my mouth offers praises to You with joyful lips.

*When I remember You on my bed,
I meditate and thoughtfully focus on You in the
night watches,
For You have been my help,
And in shadow of Your wings, at the foot of the
cross, I sing for joy.
My soul, my life, my very self clings to You;
Your right hand upholds me.*

During Lent many of us fast in some form or another, but it is always in order to feast on God and God's word, and God's actions, and who the Triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit are, their love for us and for our world.

When I feast upon God, when I meditate on all that God has done and is doing in my life, and in our world, I rejoice, my soul is satisfied, there is nothing more I need...

All is well and all manner of things will be well.
All praise and glory to God.

Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift.