

Something Different



This week some thoughts from Andy on Faith
And some other thoughts on Hope

The nature of Faith

Perhaps it's the seemingly endless stream of tragic news - not now always affecting "someone else" on the other side of the world, but directly impacting those I know and love on a daily basis. Perhaps it's the fact that the scaffolding of routine which has supported my Christian practice for so long has been removed, or at least altered out of all recognition. But for whatever reason, I have found myself repeatedly asking over these past months, "What is faith?" What is it really - when the supports are stripped away?

I have found these 2 poems by Ann Lewin to have been both thought-provoking and challenging:

Moving Mountains

Only have faith...
But that's the problem;
How much do we need?
What if we haven't enough?

The questions miss the point:

Faith is not a commodity
To be possessed,
A bargaining counter
Used to get things done;
Faith is the orientation
Of our lives, a gift
Which shifts perceptions,
Takes us deeper into the mystery of God.

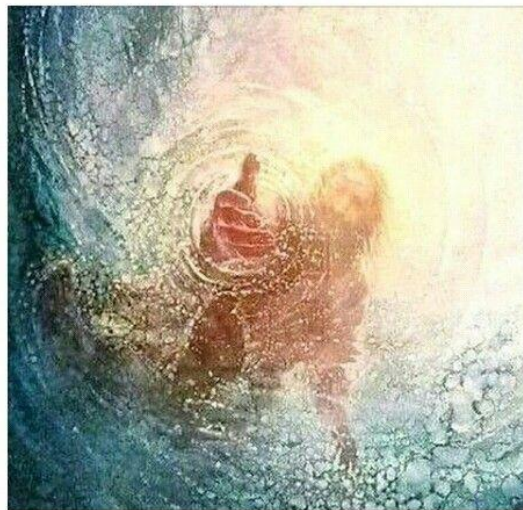
Are you Sure?

Faith is not certainty,
Precluding debate, forbidding doubt.
That is faith's opposite.

Faith invites discussion,
Requires our exploration,
Embraces doubt, and
Sets all in the context of
The faithfulness of God
Known in the past.

Faith keeps us looking
Forward, takes us deeper
Into the mysteries of God,
Encourages hope.

"... deeper into the mystery of God." The temptation in times of great uncertainty is to cling ever more tightly to old certainties. But at the heart of the Christian life is a journey into the mystery of God, an openness to discovering that the God we thought we understood is greater still - more loving, more compassionate, more able to bring life from what seems dead. That openness, based on trust in God's faithfulness, is what faith is really all about. And of all the good which might conceivably come from this pandemic, a fresh openness to that sort of faith would surely be among the greatest. We are called to be people of hope - and hope is more needed now than at any time I can remember.



Yongsung-Kim

<https://www.pinterest.co.uk/pin/452682200022261532/>

Hope



This beautiful painting by GF Watts depicts Hope, “He painted blind Hope seated on a globe and playing on a lyre which has all its strings broken except one. She bends her head to listen to the faint music,”

In this long season of pandemic, anxiety and sickness this moving image invites us to join the figure, as she chooses to listen to the faint note of hope despite the fact that she can see nothing.

As you take some time to sit with this painting ask God to whisper his still small voice of Hope in the midst of lament and longing.

Lesley Sutton.

May you have a deep sense of hopefulness, strengthening your soul, reviving your spirit and emboldening your heart. May what lies ahead be stronger than what lies behind and may possibility pull you into a brighter day #niteblessing

Malcolm Duncan

And most of all, we never give up hope, even if it means singing in the dark,, at times, because there’s nothing else to do.

Dorcas Smucker

<https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/watts-hope-n01640>

<https://www.facebook.com/passionartmcr/>

<https://www.facebook.com/niteblessings/photos/a.199717480975782/622951291985730/?type=3&theater>

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