

Speaking to the soul



Honest with God

I think of the good old days, long since ended, when my nights were filled with joyful songs. I search my soul and ponder the difference now. Has the Lord rejected me forever? Will he never again be kind to me? Psalm 77:5-7

These are painful verses. Asaph, the psalmist, is in the pit of despair. He feels that God has rejected him completely. He

looks back at how things used to be, but those memories are painful in themselves because his present predicament appears hopeless. His complete honesty is precious. There is no pretence. He tells God exactly how he feels. There is something incredibly healthy about this because strong relationships can only grow where there is honesty. Asaph feels completely let down by God, and he lets him know it.

Christian worship can very easily be less than honest. When we sing of our complete confidence in God, does that always reflect the way we feel? It was the great Christian writer A W Tozer who wrote: “Christians don’t tell lies – they just go to church and sing them.” This is of course not always the case, but there is a great danger in us singing hymns and songs unthinkingly. This isn’t a new problem. In Isaiah, the Lord said to his people: “These people say they are mine. They honour me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. And their worship of me is nothing but man-made rules learned by rote” (Isaiah 29:13).

The psalmist’s honesty led him to reflect more deeply on Israel’s history. As he did so, he recognised just how great God was. He particularly focused on the amazing way in which God had led his people in the Exodus. I suspect that if he had continued to reflect on his own feelings and predicament, he might have continued to spiral downwards in his dark thoughts, but as he opened his mind to how God had been at work in history, he came to a new place of confidence and faith.

QUESTION

When are you able to be completely honest with God?

PRAYER

Lord God, I thank you for your perfect love for me and I pray that you will help me to become increasingly honest with you. Amen

Photo - Mosaic of the Last Supper Westminster Abbey

This intricate mosaic of the Last Supper is from the Abbey's High Altar screen. It was designed by J.R. Clayton and made by Italian artist Antonio Salviati.

The inscription along the top reads 'The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ' - a quotation from the book of Revelation.

