

Going for a walk with God. 29-3-2020 Springtime

If you're taking your daily exercise and you'd like to turn it into a walk with God, whether on Sunday or any other day, here are some suggestions.

It's **springtime** and there are signs of it all over the place. What can you see? Give thanks to God for the faithfulness of the seasons and the hope that is to be found in a daffodil or blossom or insects making their brave way into the world - I've spotted four bumblebees so far. (Still too early for the swallows, Robert!)

Song of Songs 2:10b-14

Come then, my love; my darling, come with me.
The winter is over; the rains have stopped;
in the countryside the flowers are in bloom.
This is the time for singing; the song of doves is heard in the fields.
Figs are beginning to ripen; the air is fragrant with blossoming vines.
Come then, my love; my darling, come with me.
You are like a dove that hides in the crevice of a rock.
Let me see your lovely face and hear your enchanting voice.

Words comparing love to springtime, and yet as spring arrives we also seem to have gone back into winter in other ways as the lockdown takes force. We're hunkering down, waiting for the worst to pass and better times to come. **Lent** as a time of fasting coincides with the leanest time of the year for farmers where the winter stocks are almost finished and the new crops not yet there. And yet there are shoots and signs of hope and promise.

The **Song of Songs** is all about love and the celebration of love. You may want to read the whole book yourselves, especially if you've never read it before.

Reflect on times of hope and new beginnings in your own life. Was it young love or a good job or new birth or the blessings of retirement or others things for you?

How does it feel at the start? And with everything as routine sets in, things change a bit. The blossom gives way to leaves; the buds open to flowers which become dusty (or drenched!); the bright green grass soon needs to be cut, which is a chore; weeds grow up among the cultivated plants; the birds eat the birdfood and make a mess!

But we have to enjoy the pleasures while they are there and find the good in the small things. In the enforced shut down in which you find yourself, find as many things you can that are good about it and give thanks. And then really, really appreciate them.

Share that with someone else.

Pray

Find **something small** to give thanks for. Offer your delight to God for blessing.
Find **something enormous** to give thanks for. Feel your own smallness within it and know you belong to God.

Think of **a person** you care for to pray for. Know that God is with you both.
Think of **a situation** which seems vast to offer to God. Know that God is greater than we can ever imagine, even if we completely blow our minds.

2 Corinthians 9:6-11

Remember that the person who plants few seeds will have a small crop; the one who plants many seeds will have a large crop. You should each give, then, as you have decided, not with regret or out of a sense of duty; for God loves the one who gives gladly. And God is able to give you more than you need, so that you will always have all you need for yourselves and more than enough for every good cause. As the scripture says,

“He gives generously to the needy; his kindness lasts forever.”

And God, who supplies seed for the sower and bread to eat, will also supply you with all the seed you need and will make it grow and produce a rich harvest from your generosity. He will always make you rich enough to be generous at all times, so that many will thank God for your gifts which they receive from us.

Blessing

May God of the spring be with us, in all that is fresh and gives hope.

May God of the summer be with us, in all that brings warmth to our souls.

May God of the autumn be with us, in beauty and peace and letting go.

May God of the winter be with us, and carry us through the darkness till the spring comes again.

Songs to hum or belt out as you choose

Look forward in faith
Who put the colours in the rainbow?
All things bright and beautiful

Great is thy faithfulness, O God my Father,
there is no shadow of turning with thee;
thou changest not, thy compassions they fail not,
as thou hast been thou forever wilt be.

*Great is thy faithfulness! Great is thy faithfulness!
Morning by morning new mercies I see;
all I have needed thy hand hath provided -
great is thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me.*

Summer and winter, and seed-time and harvest,
sun, moon and stars in their courses above,
join with all nature in manifold witness
to thy great faithfulness, mercy and love.

Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth,
thine own dear presence to cheer and to guide;
strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow,
blessings all mine, with ten thousands beside.