

TFD#57 24th March 2021 “A day of reflection”

Thank you Mark for the introduction, and good morning to everyone.

As I record this thought for the day, it is Tuesday 23rd March 2021. Exactly one year on since the first lockdown was announced last Spring. I don't think I'll ever forget those shocking words spoken to the nation by Prime Minister Boris Johnson “From this evening I must give the British people a very simple instruction - you must stay at home”¹.

It was a bewildering and scary time, and though the weather was warm for months, schools shut, markets tumbled, sickness and mortality sky rocketed and since that time around 120,000 people have died in the UK alone. Although we give thanks for the vaccines, and the remarkable work of the NHS, we are not out of the woods yet, as neighbouring countries face a 3rd wave.

Today, Tuesday, has been called a day of reflection, and by the time you hear this message on Wednesday morning you may well have taken part in a minute's silence at midday, and you may well have stood on your doorsteps at 8pm to mark the occasion with your neighbours.

Where do we turn when great tragedies happen? There is an extraordinary book in the Old Testament called Lamentations. The word means tears.

It speaks of the absolute carnage of suffering and loss faced by the Jewish people when their city was ransacked and burned to the ground in 587BC.

What is remarkable is that the first letter of each sentence is carefully put in alphabetical order, giving a sense of ordered reflection in the middle of the devastation.

Right at the centre of the book we find these words of hope, which I will close with now. Lamentations chapter 3 verses 22-24, in which the writer looks to God and his great love in the face of tragedy and loss. In this time of reflection, we would do well to do likewise.

Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed,
for his compassions never fail.

23 They are new every morning;
great is your faithfulness.

24 I say to myself, 'The Lord is my portion;
therefore I will wait for him.'

Thank you for listening.

Followed by “In my Life ” by the Beatles.

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/pm-address-to-the-nation-on-coronavirus-23-march-2020>