

Spiritual exercise 21 April 2020



How can we sing the songs of the Lord while we are in "Lockdown"?

The pop group Boney M released the popular song “By the rivers of Babylon” which is a modern adaptation of Psalm 137. Although their interpretation is quite cheery and upbeat, the actual context of Psalm 137 is quite different. In the year 586 BC the Babylonians invaded Jerusalem, destroying the whole city and capturing those not killed in the bloody invasion, taking them as exiles to Babylon. The temple which was on Mount Zion was destroyed. The Jews thought it would never happen to them because God lives in his temple. In Psalm 137 the Psalmist is remembering how devastated they were in exile, describing how they came together as slaves at the canals that came out of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers and how the Babylonians asked them to sing about their temple on Zion, and their God. They could not bring themselves to sing any songs. They just hung their harps on the branches of the trees. How could they sing the songs of the Lord in a foreign, unholy land? God is holy and for them it was not appropriate to sing his praise in such circumstances!

We find ourselves in unprecedented times and in many ways, we have become “captives” of a virus that is threatening our existence. We can no longer worship God in our church buildings and all of us are longing to sing God’s praise again with fellow Christians. Many people feel “spiritually isolated” but God does not live in a temple or a church building or a specific place; a truth that the captives in Babylon discovered a long time ago. While we are in lockdown, we can still worship God and connect with other fellow Christians over the phone/with email/WhatsApp/zoom and through prayer. May we start singing praises to God every time we feel spiritually alone and isolated. Someone recently said, “while you wash your hands sing a hymn”. Amen.

Tuesday 21 April 2020

Psalm 137: “How can we sing the songs of the Lord while in a foreign land?”

Prayer

Heavenly Father move our hearts to praise you with every moment of our being,
help us to keep on singing praises to your Holy Name despite our current circumstances.
Lord, hear our songs of worship and praise. Amen



Listen to and read the words of the hymn: "Love lifted me".