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## Stillness in the storm

### Bible Reading: Psalm 29

Honour the Lord, you heavenly beings;  
Honour the Lord for his glory and strength.  
Honour the Lord for the glory of his name.  
Worship the Lord in the splendour of his holiness.

The voice of the Lord echoes above the sea.  
The God of glory thunders.  
The Lord thunders over the mighty sea.  
The voice of the Lord is powerful;  
the voice of the Lord is majestic.  
The voice of the Lord splits the mighty cedars;  
the Lord shatters the cedars of Lebanon.  
He makes Lebanon's mountains skip like a calf;  
he makes Mount Hermon leap like a young wild ox.  
The voice of the Lord strikes  
with bolts of lightning.  
The voice of the Lord makes the barren wilderness quake;  
the Lord shakes the wilderness of Kadesh.  
The voice of the Lord twists mighty oaks  
and strips the forests bare.  
In his Temple everyone shouts, 'Glory!'

The Lord rules over the floodwaters.  
The Lord reigns as king forever.  
The Lord gives his people strength.  
The Lord blesses them with peace.

### Reflection

How do we feel when we find ourselves in the midst of a storm, when the thunder is roaring above us and when the lightning is flashing across the sky?

During the past 10 weeks of lockdown we have had time to stop, think and to consider the way we live. Some people have discovered a new joy in gardening, cooking or just being quiet and enjoying nature. Others have struggled with the solitude and isolation, which has challenged them and their mental health. Amidst all the terrors of the storm the mind of David the psalmist was still and calm and it led him to tell of the power and greatness of God. We do not need to dread the ferocity of the elements when we know that they are under the absolute control of God who is infinite in goodness, truth, mercy, and love.

I have a farm and so I am constantly reminded of the joys of nature and the wonders of new life. For farmers life has pretty much carried on as normal because farming is an isolated occupation. On my farm we have recently seen new life in chicks, ducklings, pigs and calves. All the birth reminds us that God is at the very centre of creation and is all powerful, all seeing and ever present. This terrible illness that we are experiencing has actually enabled us to find new opportunities and ways of doing and being church; it has created a new community spirit that has been lacking in recent years and it has shown us new ways of praising and worshipping God, whilst enabling people to see that God can be praised and worshipped anywhere.

This psalm is a psalm of praise, a psalm or acknowledgement of God's greatness and power. The images of cedars shattering and calves skipping and oxen leaping convey thoughts of wonder and joy. It is the joy I see every year when I turn my cattle out of the shed onto the spring grass they run, skip and go crazy for a while. This is how I see God in this psalm and yet the scary images of wildernesses shaking and oaks and forests being striped, remind us of the power of God. If these fearful elements rage without any control and the lightning sounds at will then we might well tremble.

But faith keeps our mind from being afraid and lifts our soul in adoration to God. It inspires our confidence in the one who has power to control these frightening elements. So in God we put our trust.

In 2 Corinthians 4:8-9 we read, 'We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed'. So take heart: God is with us and we will come through.

## **Prayer**

God of power and might, creator and sustainer of life, your glory and majesty overflows in abundance and creation speaks of your beauty.

We honour you with our prayers of adoration giving you the respect you deserve. You alone are holy and deserve all of our thanks and praise.

Help us to see you in all things both good and when times challenge us. We ask this in Jesus name. Amen.

## **Response**

Take time to be still, to look, to hear and to see God in creation. Think of new ways of being church to your neighbours. New ways of reaching out by picking up the phone and saying hello are you alright do you need help, are you coping.

As farming minister for the Church of Scotland I have been doing this for the past 3 months and I have been uplifted by the many words of thanks from people I have contacted and the messages I have received back. Just saying hello makes a difference so why not pick up the phone and make a difference too.

- Revd. Chris Blackshaw, Ayr Farming Support