

## 26 March 4th Sunday in Lent

**“My Song Is Love Unknown”** words  
by Samuel Crossman

Why, what has my Lord done?  
What makes this rage and spite?  
He made the lame to run,  
he gave the blind their sight.  
Sweet injuries!  
Yet they at these  
themselves displease  
and 'giants him rise.



***The LORD said to Samuel, "How long will you grieve over Saul? I have rejected him from being king over Israel. Fill your horn with oil and set out; I will send you to Jesse the***

*Bethlehemite, for I have provided for myself a king among his sons."*  
*1 Samuel 16 v 1.*

**Lent is not just about resisting temptation** – it is about repentance, making ourselves ready for the future. The spiritual discipline of Lent, as we look to mature in our spiritual lives will, if it is real, be made clear in the way we lead our lives. There is a sense in which Lent is about preparing for the future, the resurrection life and the salvation acts of God. Samuel Crossman's great hymn "My song is love unknown," of which the verse above is verse 4 - ends with the words, "This is my friend, in whose sweet praise I all my days could gladly spend." The hymn that reflects upon the story of Jesus' passion ends by affirming the sustaining joy of a future in fellowship with the Saviour.

"Look to the future" is also the message of the biblical passage quoted above. God challenges Samuel no longer to grieve over Saul and his failings, Samuel had seen in

Saul a person who could lead and inspire the Israelites - but as time went by his corruption and psychological demise became clear for all to see. Samuel looks back with acute sadness. But God is saying to Samuel look ahead. I am doing a new thing. Christians when gathering together can too often be looking back with a sense of sadness that things are not as they were. But the challenge of mission is to see how, in God's name, we can change the world. It is therefore always forward looking.

I perceive a palpable sense of hopelessness especially among the young here in the West Bank. Many are finding it hard to look ahead with any sense of hope. It feels to many that they are in a desert, the heat is on, the water is short, the way ahead looks difficult and uncertain. There is a Christian message of hope that needs to be communicated - in the end Justice will triumph, in the end the ways of God will win through. That can though be a very hard message to communicate in the

context we find today in the West Bank and Gaza. It is also a very heard message to hear.

As we progress through the weeks of lent, increasingly considering the passion of our Lord in the days leading up to Good Friday, may we be ready to hear the resurrection message of Easter, - nothing is beyond the capacity of God. The God who raised Jesus from the dead is more than capable of resolving the problems that seem intractable to us - even the conflict between Israel and Palestine. May our faith shine forth with hope for all God's world.

**Let us Pray,**

Holy God, sometimes it feels as if the problems we face in life will never go away. Some of the political conflicts of the world seem intractable. Yet nothing is impossible to you. Help us to remember that there is always hope when we hope in you. This prayer we pray in the name of Jesus. Amen.

Devotion written by Rev. John Howard,  
Methodist Liaison in Palestine and Israel,  
from the Methodist Church in Britain.

Picture: camel wandering in the wilderness,  
taken by Rev. Kristen L. Brown