The Journey to Jerusalem

(6) What awaits in Jerusalem  Luke 18:31-43; Psalm 130

1. Journey’s end... and beginning (Luke 18:31-43)
The time for Jesus’s death was drawing near – both Matthew and Mark also now set that in terms of going up to Jerusalem (Mt.20:17; Mk.10:32). This is the third time that Jesus has told his disciples what will happen to him there – mocking, flogging and execution, but then resurrection (33; 9:22; 9:44). All this is a necessary fulfilment of prophecy (31) but still “its meaning was hidden from them” (34; 9:43). Only after he had risen would they begin to understand (Lk.24:25-27).

Luke immediately goes on to tell the story of a blind man at Jericho, the last town Jesus would reach before arriving at Jerusalem (35). So it’s significant that he should be openly recognised as “Son of David” i.e. the Messiah (38-39; 20:41-44). But Jesus understood this not in terms of being a national leader – he had come to give sight to the blind, both physically and spiritually (4:18; 7:22), and to save the lost (19:10). So this healing of the blind man was a symbol of the salvation that he gives to those who believe in him and follow him. Jesus’s death was not the end but just the beginning of his saving work (42-43).

2. Put your hope in the Lord (Psalm 130)
Between the Old and New Testaments are 400 years of waiting for the promised Messiah, with faith in God, but misunderstanding too. Often in our own journey there is the need for patient waiting i.e. not a passive inactivity but an active trust and hope in God (5,7; Is.40:31).

This penitential Psalm expresses confident trust that God will deliver us from the depths of sin and despair (1-3). His mercy results in both forgiveness and reverent awe (4); because of his grace and unfailing love, we have the assurance of full redemption from all our sins (7-8). The fact of forgiveness is not in doubt, even though the basis of it would only be realised through Christ and his death (Ps.32:1; Ro.4:7; 5:1-2,8; Eph.1:7). Having such a hope in God, enables patient trust, and the confidence to urge others also to find the same hope (5-7).

Discussion 1 – Journey’s end... and beginning
The disciples had spent a lot of time with Jesus. So why was what he said to them about his impending death still so obscure to them?

“Your faith has saved you” (18:42 The word translated healed literally means saved.) Where, and how, do people begin to find saving faith?

Discussion 2 – Put your hope in the Lord
What do v.1-4 tell us about the depth of our sin and the greatness of God’s forgiveness? Why is the outcome of that a proper fear of God? (v4 “Therefore you are feared” NIV / “that you may be revered” JB.)

What does it mean to put your hope in the Lord and in his word (5,7)?
What characterises watchmen waiting for the morning (6)? In what ways are you currently waiting for the Lord more than that?

Reflection:
What has particularly struck you out of today’s study and discussion?

How might that help you to be a better follower of Jesus?

Throughout this coming week, reflect further on these thoughts and continue the journey through Luke’s Gospel with these daily readings:

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If you have internet access, you can read a daily short blog with comment on these verses www.skeltonbrotton.wixsite.com/christians