

"MAGIC STRING"

Bible reading: Psalm 86

Give ear, O Lord, to my prayer:
And listen to the voice of my supplication.
In the day of my distress I will call upon you,
for you will answer me.
Teach me your way, O Lord, and I will walk in your truth:
Knit my heart to you, that I may fear your name.

Just read a book by Rachel Clarke called *Dear Life* (2020). (Highly recommended, btw — quite a tough read, but a very thoughtful reflection on issues of life and death by a palliative care doctor.) She tells the story of a psychologist who was called in to help a small child who was frightened at having to go into the radiotherapy unit, where even her parents weren't allowed to be with her. The psychologist devised an idea she called "magic string" — a ball of brightly coloured twine that the child could hold onto, knowing her Mum or Dad was on the other end of the line, out of sight but still loving and caring behind the door. And it worked! It wasn't a con. Mum and Dad were really there, but the string just gave her something to hold onto to connect her with their presence, and took away the fear.

We all need something to hold onto, especially when we feel alone. Psalm 86 is a kind of "magic string", a thread connecting us with God. God is always there, but we can easily lose the sense of his presence, especially when we're frightened. I might feel I want to pray, but the words won't come. Sharing other people's prayers, tried and tested over the centuries (reading aloud is even better), gives me something to hold onto, to connect me with God's presence and take away the fear. Jesus said, "Lo, I am with you always, to the end of time" (Matthew 28.20). That's a promise!

Singing is good too! Here's today's choice from the choir:

In the Lord I'll be ever thankful,
In the Lord I will rejoice.
Look to God, do not be afraid:
Lift up your voices, the Lord is near!
Lift up your voices, the Lord is near.

God bless,
Loveday