

Remind yourself of the promise we have in Christ

*The righteous cry out, and the Lord hears them; he delivers them from all their troubles.
The Lord is close to the broken hearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.
(Psalm 34 v 17-18)*

What a few months it's been - the whole miserable shebang seems to have lasted a lifetime. No church gathering, no Communion, no sport, no nights out, no socialising, no train travel. For a rugby fan, rail enthusiast and churchgoer like me it has been awful.

Over the last few months my Mother, brother-in-law and three close friends of my own age have also passed away. The funerals, though heartfelt, were mechanical in their sanitised simplicity. The mourners couldn't even hug one another. It has been so, so hard.

The streets have been silent, the shops shut, a pall of sadness and desperation has hung over us as we watched loved ones, health workers, neighbours and friends taken by this cursed virus. And here we are, six months on and it is STILL out there threatening us.

So, thank God for Psalm 34, a promise of salvation: from evil, from the unrighteous. David spells out the dividing line between those who are good, and those who are bad. And the good news is that God will deliver good folk from ALL their troubles.

What's more, there is also a huge promise of comfort here, as well as justice. God is close to us with our broken hearts and will save people crushed in spirit.

How do our hearts heal in the midst of this maelstrom? David writes that the Lord God will redeem his servants. That promise of redemption cuts through all this pain and anxiety.

We have nothing to fear if we trust in Christ and his promise of eternal bliss and light. Christ makes it clear in John's Gospel: *"Just as the living Father sent me and I live because of the Father, so the one who feeds on me will live because of me."* (John 6 v 57).

That exhortation to feed on Him is the key to emerging from this nightmare. Hold fast in faith, remind yourself of the promise we have in Christ, turn whenever you can to God in prayer and just open that Bible and read and digest its wisdom.

God will see us safe home.

**Mark Ashley, Vision Champion,
All Saints Church, Appley Bridge**