

Devotional Blog

Sunday 5th July 2020

Over the last few weeks there has been a lot of talk about statues and monuments that relate to our not too glorious past. As well as statues and monuments that mark a time in our history our countryside is littered with castles and forts that depict a time when many battles and conflicts took place.

Unfortunately, we cannot eradicate the unsavoury events of the past, but hopefully we can learn from past mistakes. Of course, not every statue that has been erected is of someone whose actions were questionable.

Castles and fortresses on the other hand were built to protect and secure those inside from invaders. Many were built on high ground to be able to see any potential enemies approaching. If you have ever visited a castle or fort and climbed to the top the view is often spectacular and if the weather is in your favour you can see for many miles.

The image of a castle or fortress is one of a solid building that is secure. When you see the thickness of the walls you can see that they were built to last.

The highest point of a fortress is the lookout tower, it was the safest place to be if there was an attack. God is often referred to as a fortress, for example Psalm 59:16 - for you are my fortress, my refuge in times of trouble. In Proverbs 18:10 The Lord is referred to as a strong tower and the righteous run there for safety.

Recently we have all been encouraged to stay safe in the fortress of our own homes, but there comes a time when you need to leave the "safety zone" and head for the "battlefield" of the supermarket. There is still protection available in the shape of gloves, masks and goggles as well as hand gel.

I guess many of us have felt like prisoners in our own homes during this period of restricted movement, especially if you have been shielding. Every day in prison is much the same and I have heard many people say the same during the lockdown. When will it end? It is easy to drift into despair and lose hope.

The Jewish nation spent many years as captives in foreign lands and even when they returned to Jerusalem they still felt as if they were prisoners. Their land had been taken over by the Romans.

The prophet Zechariah had a message for them; 9:12 “Return to your fortress, O prisoners of hope.” I wonder how hopeful the Israelites actually felt at the time.

I believe that this is a word for us today, as prisoners of covid 19. We are to return to our fortress.

Psalm 71:3 Be my rock of refuge, to which I can always go; give the command to save me, for you are my rock and my fortress.

Are we prisoners of despair, wondering if we will ever get through this virus or are we prisoners of hope because our hope is in our fortress that can never be shaken?

Amen

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