

MONDAY
15 JUNE
1 Kings 21:1-16
Psalm 5:1-5
Matthew 5:38-42

TUESDAY
16 JUNE
1 Kings 21:17-end
Psalm 51:1-9
Matthew 5:43-end

WEDNESDAY
17 JUNE
2 Kings 2:1. 6-14
Psalm 31:21-end
Matthew 6:1-6. 16-18

THURSDAY
18 JUNE
Ecclesiasticus 48:1-14
or Isaiah 63:7-9
Psalm 97:1-8
Matthew 6:7-15

FRIDAY
19 JUNE
2 Kings 11:1-4. 9-18. 20
Psalm 132:1-5. 11-13
Matthew 6:19-23

SATURDAY
20 JUNE
2 Chronicles 24:17-25
Psalm 89:25-33
Matthew 6:24-end

REFLECTION

Our psalms this week map a familiar journey from penitence to assurance.

As we begin, there is a reminder that, simply in turning towards God, the psalmist is confirming an existing relationship: *“to you I pray...”* Sometimes ninety nine per cent of faith is simply turning up.

Even when we’re overwhelmed by failure and sin, what counts is to keep the conversation going. So the burdensome grief that weighs down the *“Miserere”* (which means *“have mercy”* rather than *“I’m very miserable”*; as one small chorister proclaimed) is balanced by a confidence that God can and will act to make things better. No matter what we’ve done, and how we might feel, the awesome God, whose power shapes creation, offers *“steadfast love”* to those who recognise that they belong to God’s family.

Sometimes, we seem to need to confirm our own credentials.

“Remember in David’s favour all the hardships he endured” is less a reminder to God than a reassurance to the psalmist that, despite everything, he has tried to get things right and God has made promises which will be honoured, come what may. Our hope is not in our human fallibility but in God’s faithfulness always.

PRAYER

Holy God, though we feel small and unworthy of your love, we trust that your promises stand firm for ever. Though we may deserve punishment, we know that your love is unshakeable, your forgiveness swift and sure. Keep us walking with you, and give us courage to turn to you, even when we despair of ourselves.



Stained-glass window depicting a square notation used in Gregorian chant. Benedictine monastery in Erie, Pennsylvania.

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CLIMBING KILIMANJARO

PART IV – ENJOYING THE JOURNEY

John Witcombe continues his account of climbing Kilimanjaro.

The Lemosho route on Kilimanjaro winds through tropical rainforest before ascending through mountain heath, moorland, alpine desert and ultimately the completely barren summit zone, where nothing can grow except the hardiest lichens – some of the slowest growing and oldest living things on earth.

Starting out through the forest, we were thrilled with glimpses of the feathery tails of black and white Colobus monkeys in the trees. Steamy and teeming with life, this is like the beginning of any great journey, full of mystery and wonder. Giant tree ferns shelter extraordinary indigenous flowers, like the unique *Impatiens Kilimanjaro*, springing from the undergrowth. The going was quite easy, and at our first campsite we settled happily into our new tent homes.

Over the next eight days we made our way up and down the long south side of the mountain, acclimatising by *“walking high, sleeping low”*. Jackal droppings and buffalo tracks told of night-time visitors to our campsite but we never saw them. The mountain was often elusive, appearing in the early morning, yet swathed in cloud by ten o’clock. But the flowers were incredible, with giant lobelia hiding tiny purple flowers in huge succulent leaf heads, and *“everlasting flowers”* evolved to withstand extremes of temperature and lack of moisture, exploding with colour among the rocks.

I had not expected such variety, or such beauty. I thought this was a journey about a destination, but it turned out it was all about the journey after all. Looking around us, taking it all in, having to walk slowly because of the altitude, keeping pace with the music streaming through my *“magic beanie”* hat, I was in a new sort of heaven.

Journeys can be like that. We can be taken by surprise by the most mundane surroundings if our pace is slow enough to take everything in, to truly inhabit the gift of each minute. Guides on Kili say *“pole, pole”* (pronounced *“polay, polay”*) – it means *“slow, slow”*. For me, on this mountain, that was part of the gift.

LIVE the WORD

SUSTAINING YOU THROUGH THE WEEK

Edited by Caroline Hodgson and Heather Smith



John on Mount Kilimanjaro

First week after Trinity

Monday 15 June to Saturday 20 June 2020

WEEK