

Advent 3rd Dec: Yet I believe



Jake Oakley

Opening Prayer

I believe in the sun
even when it isn't shining.
I believe in love
even when I am alone.
I believe in God
even when he is silent.

These words were found scrawled on a cellar wall where Jews had hidden in World War II in Cologne, Germany.

How do we hope, when all reason for hope seems to have deserted us? From where do we gain the sense of purpose and commitment that enables us to carry on?

The story continues...

In the days of King Herod of Judea, there was a priest named Zechariah, who belonged to the priestly order of Abijah. His wife was a descendant of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. Both of them were righteous before God, living blamelessly according to all the commandments and regulations of the Lord. But they had no children, because Elizabeth was barren, and both were getting on in years. Luke 1: 5 - 7

Reflection

"Because I'm worth it" is the anthem of our times. We are taught to believe that we deserve good things from life, although often without any expectation that we will have earned them. The story of Zechariah and Elizabeth challenges that at its very heart. They have lived blameless lives before God, keeping the commandments, keeping faith with God. They are getting on in years. How they must have prayed for children, longed for the 'reward' for their faithfulness, yet they remain childless. They remain childless, but they remain faithful, because their hope is in God and not in anything that this world holds.

Exercise

Take a tea-light. Light the flame and consider how frail and fragile it is. Think of the words "a bruised reed he will not break, and a dimly burning wick he will not quench." (Isaiah 42: 3) What gives you hope? When God seems distant, where do you turn?

Jane Denniston