

MONDAY

22 JUNE

2 Kings 17:5-8. 13-

15. 18

Psalms 60:1-5. 11-

end

Matthew 7:1-5

TUESDAY

23 JUNE

2 Kings 19:9b-11.

14-21. 31-36

Psalms 48:1-2. 8-end

Matthew 7:6. 12-14

WEDNESDAY

24 JUNE

Birth of John

the Baptist

Isaiah 40:1-11

Psalms 85:7-end

Acts 13:14b-26 or

Galatians 3:23-end

Luke 1:57-66. 80

THURSDAY

25 JUNE

2 Kings 24:8-17

Psalms 79:1-9. 12

Matthew 7:21-end

FRIDAY

26 JUNE

2 Kings 25:1-12

Psalms 137:1-6

Matthew 8:1-4

SATURDAY

27 JUNE

Lamentations 2:2.

10-14. 18-19

Psalms 74:1-3. 21-

end

Matthew 8:5-17

# REFLECTION

Actions have consequences, and in our Old Testament readings

this week God's people confront the disaster that their disobedience has brought upon them. Despite frequent reminders from the prophets, they have deliberately bought into the

spirit of the age, worshipping false gods with enthusiasm. Things are so bad that God no longer wants to engage, sending them into exile to get them out of sight. But this is also a story of God's unrelenting commitment to the people through divine words of hope, judgement, summons, and warning, as God seeks to maintain the covenant relationship: "I will defend this city to save it, for my own sake and for the sake of my servant David."

As Israel sinks into corporate lament, sitting in the dust, it might seem that all is lost, but there is yet hope.

John the Baptist's birth lies far in the future, but the promise God offers through Isaiah points not just to John's ministry but speaks also into all situations of desolation; those times when our own folly has reaped its inevitable, painful, reward. God is coming, not with fear but with comfort for all people. Even us.

PRAYER

God of grace and mercy, though we too often turn away in search of other gods, you stay constant, and reward us from the treasury of your kindness, which outweighs even our intransigence and pride. When times are dark, and we seem to be lost in the desolation we have caused, reshape the landscape of our lives, and gather us once more in your loving arms.



# CLIMBING KILIMANJARO

## PART V – REACHING THE SUMMIT

John Witcombe concludes his account of climbing Kilimanjaro.

We were roused from our sleeping bags at ten o'clock on Saturday night. Putting on all the clothes we had, using head torches to see the path, we set off slowly to climb the gruelling final 1,200 metres to the summit. Extreme altitude makes both thought and movement difficult. Each step takes a huge effort and progress seems painfully slow. Nausea and headaches are overwhelming, and the determination to succeed competes with the knowledge that to press on through the symptoms of altitude sickness can be fatal. "Why on earth am I doing this?" is the big question.

And then, after seven hours of putting one foot in front of another, we reached Stella Point on the edge of the volcanic cone. Across to our left were the tops of the glaciers tinged pink in the sunrise. An hour's walk round the rim got us to the summit, 5,895 metres, almost deserted because our progress had been slow and others had already left. There was a surreal sense of unbelief that we'd made it, and in truth it was so cold, with such a gale blowing, that we just wanted to get down again. But as we walked away we looked down on the ice cliffs of the remaining glaciers, so much smaller than when Meyer first climbed Kili a hundred and thirty years ago. In ten years, we'd been told, they will be gone.

Slithering down the way we had laboured up in the dark, the bleakness of the landscape was extraordinary, like Frodo and Sam on their way down Mount Doom. Achieving our objectives is not always what we think or hope for. I'm amazed I made it to the top of Africa in my sixtieth year. But, looking back, it was the journey across the lower slopes that was most surprising and most rewarding.

I'm very happy that my sixtieth year started on the top of Kilimanjaro. Now I'm back to the day job, scaling the challenges and heights of being Dean of Coventry Cathedral. But it doesn't take much for me to think myself back to the mountain and a journey fulfilled.



At the summit of Kilimanjaro

# LIVE the WORD

SUSTAINING YOU THROUGH THE WEEK

Edited by Caroline Hodgson and Heather Smith

Second week after Trinity

Monday 22 June to Saturday 27 June 2020

WEEK