

The Second Song of the Servant – Isaiah 49: 1 – 6.

In the second 'Servant Song' the Servant thinks about his call by God, which dates from before his birth. His whole life has been lived under the protection of the Lord, who has declared *You are my servant Israel, in whom I shall be glorified*: but he admits that he has been discouraged, thinking *I have toiled in vain, I have exhausted myself for nothing*.

There are times when we feel discouraged – this time of trouble and isolation may be one of them – and our Lord, sharing our human nature as he does, will have felt the same when his opponents plotted against him and his friends simply didn't understand.

But God's response to the Servant's discouragement is to reaffirm his calling: *I will make you the light of the nations, so that my salvation may reach the ends of the earth*.

John 13: 21 – 33, 36 – 38.

The Gospel, taken from John's account on the Last Supper, gives us examples of the plotting of an enemy, and the failure of friends to understand, that Jesus faced in the hours before his arrest. First, there is the betrayal of Judas, to whom Jesus gives a last chance to draw back – but *Satan entered into him and he went out. And it was night*. The darkness of evil closes round the one who is the Light of the World. And then there is Peter's failure, even at this late stage, to understand what is about to happen to his Lord – and we know that this failure will lead to the greater failure of denying that he is a disciple of Jesus.

But, amid all this hostility and misunderstanding, Jesus retains his faith in his Father: *Now – at this moment of darkness and isolation – Now has the Son of Man been glorified, and in him God has been glorified. If God has been glorified in him, God will in turn glorify him in himself, and will glorify him very soon*.

We know what the disciples did not – that, only three days later, the glory of Jesus, the Son of Man, achieved in his death on the cross, will be sealed by his resurrection.

In our times of anxiety and discouragement the resurrection of Jesus is the ground of our hope.