

### **SHORT TALK FOR CAREY, 22.5.22, PSALM 133**

There's a field at the back of our street. Wonderful place for a walk with the dogs, early in the morning. The dew is on the grass. The trees are brilliant green. And the birds are singing their hearts out.

Just the other morning I saw another dog-walker on the field. And he had taken off his shoes and was walking barefoot in the dew-laden grass. Very refreshing I should think. Not sure I'm brave enough to do that. But I can understand why he chose to do it.

This Psalm talks about refreshing mountain dew falling on the people of God. On Mount Zion. On the hill where God's temple is. On the city of Jerusalem. Every day without fail. And this is one of the pictures the Psalmist chooses to use of the blessing of peace. The blessing of unity between people and different peoples. Unity is 'good and pleasant'. Very refreshing.

What a hope. What a vision for Israel and Palestine in a time of deep divisions and mistrust. There was another shameful episode in the history of the 'Holy Land' recently, when the funeral of a Palestinian Christian, shot dead by an Israeli bullet, was disrupted by the Israeli army. Another example of the breakdown in relationships between people in our world.

Rev David Ronco, who preached here recently, is now on another visit to the Holy Land. Trying to encourage embattled Palestinian churches there. Trying to encourage a new vision for peace and unity between Arab and Jew; between Israeli and Palestinian; between Jews and Muslims and Christians.

Of course, until the last 20 years or so, Northern Ireland was also seen as a place where differences of religion have caused division and hatred and violence. But, as we will hear later from Elizabeth, there has always been much more to Northern Ireland than the view we get from the news. And what is more, Northern Ireland can rightly be held up as an example of the blessings of making peace. NI shows us that, even where division is deeply entrenched, peace is still possible, by the grace of God. This is also true for the Holy Land. And for Russia and Ukraine also. Very hard to see how. But the church can play an important part in re-building trust. And building a road-map towards peace.

We need to continue to pray. And continue to pray for faith to believe the impossible. For the world. And for any difficult or broken relationships in our lives. As we know, 'Nothing is impossible with God'... How refreshing is that ?