**Psalm 86.11–17**

**Teach me your way, O Lord, and I will walk in your truth; ♦︎**

**knit my heart to you, that I may fear your name.**

**I will thank you, O Lord my God, with all my heart, ♦︎**

**and glorify your name for evermore;**

**For great is your steadfast love towards me, ♦︎**

**for you have delivered my soul from the depths of the grave.**

**O God, the proud rise up against me**

**and a ruthless horde seek after my life; ♦︎**

**they have not set you before their eyes.**

**But you, Lord, are gracious and full of compassion, ♦︎**

**slow to anger and full of kindness and truth.**

**Turn to me and have mercy upon me; ♦︎**

**give your strength to your servant and save the child of your handmaid.**

**Show me a token of your favour, that those who hate me may see it and be ashamed; ♦︎**

**because you, O Lord, have helped and comforted me.**

During the time of Covid-19 I have had many conversations with people, mostly on the phone or on-line. The time has given people space to contemplate many aspects of life. In this time sometimes we have had to turn to strangers to help us, and in our villages and communities most have stepped up

As we think of our lives, whom do we follow? who is our role model? Can we turn to them in times of trouble and at any time in our life?

When David (the psalmist) went through difficulties in his life, he still wanted to remain teachable, flexible, and adaptable to God’s plans. We notice that in this prayer of psalm 86, David reminded himself not to be too wise in his own eyes. The opposite of a united heart is a divided heart, which is a heart caught between two possibilities. Could David be admitting that one part of his heart really did seek to honour God while the other part sought to rebel? It is believed that is why David prayed for God to unite and give him an undivided, single-hearted loyalty to his God. I refer again (as I did last week ) to when Jesus was asked what the greatest commandment was, He replied, “You shall love the LORD your God with all of your heart, with all of your soul, and with all of your mind” (Matt. 2:37). Total love and devotion is exactly what God desires and looks for those who believe.

Looking deeper:

Psalm 86:11 is one of my favourite verses from the psalms. When I am falling short in my actions I often pray: “Teach me your ways, O LORD, that I may live according to your truth! Grant me purity of heart, so that I may honour you.” (the version in my office)

The original Hebrew of Psalm 86:11 reads “Teach me, O Lord, your ways, that I might walk in your truth.” To walk means, in this context, to live each day. The psalmist is not asking for God to impact only his life of faith. Rather, he wants to be guided each and every day by God’s truth.

The second sentence of Psalm 86:11 could be translated, “Unite my heart so that I might fear your name.” It assumes that our hearts are confused and in need of unifying. Fearing God’s name means, honouring God. It entails living for God’s glory each and every moment. This is a most difficult task as a human being – we do fail, I certainly fail many times a day, but I am brought back to God when I stop to think, ‘what would Jesus do?’ and ask ‘teach me your ways’

Psalm 86:11 assumes that we need God to teach us and to bring our inner selves into wholeness. Then we will be able to live according to God’s truth each day, glorifying him in all we do.

As a believer, I pray for the Lord to do these very things in my life. And as a teacher of his Word, I ask that God might use me to help people know him better in every facet of their lives.

Wealthy and successful, Alfred Nobel was an engineer, businessman, and inventor. One morning, Nobel picked up a newspaper, and to his great surprise, read of his own death. The editor of the paper had obviously made a mistake. However, as Nobel read his own epitaph, he was appalled to see his life summed up with the phrase: “merchant of death.” At that point in his life, Alfred Nobel was known as the inventor of dynamite. He determined that day that he would work to be remembered differently. He devoted his energies to the creation of an annual prize to be given to those “who during the preceding year, [had] conferred the greatest benefit to mankind.” We know that award today as the Nobel Prize. Nobel later wrote, “Every person ought to have the opportunity to correct his or her epitaph in midstream.”

 If we let Him, God will also use whatever hardship we are going through for His greater purposes in our lives



PRAYER: O Lord, teach me your ways, that I might live according to your truth. May my study of your Word not be an exercise simply in gaining truth, but also a way of living according to your truth. May obedience be the end of my Bible study.

Unify my heart so that I might fear your name. Bring together the disparate parts of my inner life so I might seek you above all, each moment of each day. May my life’s purpose be, truly, to glorify you and enjoy you forever. Amen.