

Donald Trump. It surprised me how much emotion these two words brought forth in me, especially when they were followed by six other words. Loser of the US presidential election. I didn't realise how much the last 4 years had frustrated and annoyed me. How every lie and deceitful, self-aggrandising act, had eaten away at my peace. Like a small stone in my shoe, they rubbed and ground into my foot until it was sore and bloody.

I didn't realise how much I **longed** to hear these words. Until I did.

Longing is a powerful emotion, even if we don't recognise it immediately. We long for things to be better. We long for things to return to normal. We long for the world to be as it was ... a place where we can move, travel and trade. A world free of covid.

I longed for Donald Trump to be a loser. We all long for the world to be rid of this virus. Israel longs for a Messiah. Mark's community longs for a word of hope. We are in the season of longing. We are in Advent.

Israel longs for the God of their history to save them from their enemies. They long for a demonstration of power, a display so terrible that all opposed to them would tremble, even the mountains quaking.

They long for Yahweh to be theirs, anger to pass, salvation to come, for them to be Yahweh's people again.

They long for a return to normal, the world as it was, Yahweh front and centre. Mercy and forgiveness. They long for judgement to be finished, for destruction to be over, God's love to prevail ... they long ...

We long ... for things to be better. Politicians to be truthful.

Virus free. For our children and grandchildren to live in a gentle world, that cares. All children, fed and sheltered, loved and looked after. Wars to cease. Kindness everywhere.

We long for loving and safe communities. Clean water, pure air and a plastic free environment. We long for pristine oceans, forests flourishing and breathing.

Israel longs ... We long ... We are in the season of longing. We are in Advent.

The temple is destroyed, Jerusalem sacked. Romans and Jews at war and only one winner has been declared Mark's community is shattered ... so shattered they don't know what to long for.

In the heart of darkness, when even longing has been extinguished ... what do you do? ...

You hear the words of hope articulated by the prophet ... after defeat, after destruction and death ... after all this ... hope rises. We saw it all in the cross, Mark says ... then resurrection came.

This is the word we hear. That the cross of Jesus Christ and his resurrection from the dead is the hope of the world. Then ... and now.

Its fulfilment is his appearance in power and glory, establishing that Kingdom for all the nations.

Until then, we long ... and we hope.

Israel longs ...

Mark's people long...

We long ...

... For the coming of the Kingdom.

Donald Trump and all like him, undone.

Honesty. Fairness. Truthfulness. Love. Kindness. Gentleness. Food aplenty. Everyone healthy and well. The forests and seas, land and mountains, rivers and lakes ... whole. Peace.

The cross of Christ is fuel for the fire of hope, and Jesus resurrection, guarantee that longing will be filled.

Israel longs ...

Mark's people long ...

We long ...

For the coming of the Kingdom

We are in the season of longing.

We are in Advent.

Thanks be to God.