**Thursday 9th April**

Isaiah 61: 1 – 3

The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me,
    because the Lord has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor.
He has sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives
    and release from darkness for the prisoners, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favour
    and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn,

and provide for those who grieve in Zion –
to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes,
the oil of joy instead of mourning,
and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair.
They will be called oaks of righteousness,
    a planting of the Lord for the display of his splendour.

I wanted to share this beautiful passage this morning. For me, it breathes the life and hope of Jesus into every single situation we face. These are the words that Jesus uses to announce his mission as he begins his public work (Luke 4). Today is Maundy Thursday, and we remember Jesus sharing supper with his friends, his battle in the Garden of Gethsemane, his betrayal and arrest. It is because of His sacrifice for us, that this great hope is released upon the earth: the promise that there is freedom, light, hope, healing, comfort, joy, praise available in Jesus, whatever our situation. The assurance that nothing is impossible for our God. Jesus knows what it is to struggle and weep – we see that so clearly in Gethsemane. He is with us in the dark places. It is by His wounds that we find healing (Is. 53: 5).

I love that Jesus came to bind up the broken-hearted – he is such a tender, compassionate God. Call out to Him today. Maybe you are broken-hearted, maybe you know someone who is. My prayer is that as you read these words, the mighty ocean of the love of God sweeps over you, and you see a glimmer of a new day dawning.

*Lord, thank you that you so loved the world, that you gave your only Son. Thank you that he lived among us and knows our weakness and pain. Thank you that through Him you bring hope and healing. We pray for those that we know who are broken-hearted today. Please draw near to them with your love – strengthen, uphold and heal. We want to lift to you those struggling with mental illness today. We pray for those who are finding isolation a particular strain. Lord would you meet them, and help them, and bring them hope. In Jesus name. Amen*



**the mighty ocean of the love of God sweeps over you, and you see a glimmer of a new day dawning**