**Daily Prayer and Encouragement for Weds 30th December -** Tracey Nicholls

*Psalm 42 (verses 1-3 and 11)*

As the deer pants for streams of water,
    so my soul pants for you, my God.
**2**My soul thirsts for God, for the living God.
    When can I go and meet with God?
**3**My tears have been my food
    day and night,
while people say to me all day long,
    ‘Where is your God?’

**11**Why, my soul, are you downcast?
    Why so disturbed within me?
Put your hope in God,
    for I will yet praise him,
    my Saviour and my God.

How have you been doing during “Twixmas” (that strange period between Christmas and New Year)? I always find this an interesting time – after a time of festivity, feasting and food why do so many of us feel strangely discontented? We are “full” and yet also “empty”. This is not a new experience. St Augustine of Hippo lived 354-430 AD and he experienced this sense of emptiness despite a desperate search for fulfilment through excessive pleasures, false religions, philosophy, dissipation and distractions. He experienced a thirst that no amount of Prosecco, mulled wine or Shloer could quench. A thirst for the living God. The Psalmist David experienced this too and expresses his desperation so honestly and feelingly in Psalm 42.

David also did not shy away from being honest about how “downcast” he felt. But he didn’t reach for the Baileys or a self-help book – instead he looked to the Lord. He made the active choice to put his hope in God and to praise Him as “my Saviour and my God”.

Similarly, St Augustine wrote this poignant observation, “You have made us for yourself, and our hearts are restless, until they can find rest in you.”

These are such encouragements to all of us who may be feeling thirsty, restless and downcast – let’s put our hope in the Lord, our Saviour and our God. He alone is our strength and shield, and we are created for His purposes and pleasure.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wp4mMu9_fFI>