

The Good Way: Walking the Ancient Paths (Pete Greig)¹

- Where have you seen God at work in your life this week? (Share any brief examples and encouragements).
- Was there anything from Sunday's message which you found particularly inspiring or challenging?
- Was there anything else you particularly noticed?

Jeremiah 6:16 (NIVUK)

This is what the Lord says:

*'Stand at the crossroads and look;
ask for the ancient paths,
ask where the good way is, and walk in it,
and you will find rest for your souls.
But you said, "We will not walk in it." ...'*

Jeremiah has long been known as the weeping prophet. Called as a prophet to the nations when in his teens, his warnings to the nation of Judah during the reign of 5 kings went largely unheeded and he lived to see Jerusalem fall to the invading Babylonian army and the subsequent destruction of the Temple. In a time of trouble, he had a message of hope to anyone who would listen. Except almost nobody did.

You don't have to be a prophet to recognise that these are tough times now for many people both in the UK and around the world. The next couple of years are going to be economically challenging. We've just come out of a pandemic. We have just had a new monarch (not to mention several new Prime Ministers). An ongoing war in Europe casts a shadow over all of us. And yet, Pete Greig says, "The next 2 years could be the greatest of our lives."

This is a time of extraordinary opportunity. Earlier this month a 500-year-old gnarled and twisted yew growing amongst the Waverley Abbey ruins was awarded 2022's "Tree of the Year". According to *The Guardian*, Dr Michael Carter from English Heritage said, "The yew tree at Waverley Abbey has been witness to history [...] and has seen its surroundings transformed from a thriving religious community into a picturesque ruin."² It's time for a "yew-turn" – to rebuild a house of prayer for the nations and a new community.

Back in the 6th Century, St Benedict wrote, "Let us get up then, at long last, for the Scriptures rouse us when they say: 'It is high time for us to arise from sleep' (Romans 13:11). Let us open our eyes to the light that comes from God, and our ears to the voice from heaven that every day calls out this charge: 'If you hear his voice today, do not harden your hearts' (Ps 95:8)."³

- *What 'crossroads' are you facing? Are there decisions you need to make about the future? What seems particularly challenging right now? What do you see as you 'stand at the crossroads and look'?*⁴
- *What 'ancient paths' might God be inviting you to explore?*
- *What might it mean to 'ask for the ancient paths'? Who do you ask? Do you just pray about it, or are there people who have walked the path who might be able to help point you in the right direction?*
- *How do you imagine 'the good way'? What does that look like for you?*
- *Jeremiah promises a way which will bring 'rest for your souls.' How rested is your soul? What is stealing your rest?*
- *What do you think Jesus meant when he said (Matthew 11:28-30 NIVUK), 'Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.'*

Matthew 11:28-30 (MSG)

"Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you'll recover your life. I'll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me—watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won't lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with me and you'll learn to live freely and lightly."

¹ Pete Greig's message today was mainly focused on introducing the developments at Waverley Abbey. The video can be seen at, <https://www.24-7prayer.com/waverley-abbey/?fbclid=IwAR2slao4uC7ZZOuBYvY5ZRXHPfmrHwj7tJWzPUfenvAcFIW9HpzjXomOFk>

² <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2022/nov/04/yew-waverley-abbey-surrey-uk-tree-year>

³ <https://abbeyvocations.org/the-rule-of-saint-benedict>

⁴ Also note **Jeremiah 1:11,13** "The word of the Lord came to me, saying, 'Jeremiah, what do you see?'... 'What do you see?'..."