

## Daniel's reflection for week-beginning 22nd October - Forging in the Smithy of the Soul

To embrace vulnerability is to surrender to a kind of dying. It is easier to leave our life unexamined. Too many shadows and weaknesses surface when we stop to take stock of our deepest emotions. Once we begin to unblock the flow of our suppressed memories and feelings, the floodgates open. We fear we may be swept away. It is not always easy to hold our life together. We are full of contradictions. It takes a brave heart to ask the dangerous questions: 'Is there really a lot of joy in my life?', 'Do I really believe the love that I profess?', 'Am I an authentic person, always trying to tell the truth?', 'Am I living out of my ego or my essence?'

Something in us desperately resists this admission of weakness, wounded-ness and brokenness. The ego is offended at this kind of dying. It finds hard to hold its control. So do many ecclesiastical systems . . .

But we must become the salvation that Jesus has won for us; we must carry in our bodies and souls the new life that God extravagantly fills us with. Without the personal experience of faith, of having been redeemed, of dependence only on God's faithfulness we will struggle hard and the words of life will become lifeless words . . .

It is worth reminding ourselves of the questions put by Archbishop Rowan Williams when speaking to all lay ministers of the gospel: 'Are you attending to your vision? Are you stripping yourself in prayer before the terrible and searching word of God? Are you being refined in that fire? And am I? Is my vision doing that to me, breaking and remaking my thoughts and my words, breaking my heart and my mind? We Christians have the right, perhaps the duty, to put these questions to each other and to hear them from each other.

Where there is no vision in the spirit within, there will be no hope for the world without.

(Begin with the Heart pp131,133)