

Yesterday our son Ben went for an interview in London. You know when you have a real longing that something will work out for someone you love... maybe a member of your family - maybe a friend? You have a feeling that something would be good for them and you just hope that it will come to pass...

And on the other time sometimes you know that someone you love may be choosing a path that won't be good for them - and then your hope is that they may realise the dangers, and think again.

Both our readings today contain expressions of that sort of longing - longing for others, that they may find the right way and stay on it. Paul is writing from prison to the Christians in Philippi. You can feel how much he cares about them - he calls them 'my beloved' and 'my brothers and sisters, whom I love and long for, my joy and my crown.' And he pleads, with tears in his eyes, that they do not leave the way he has taught them, but they 'stand firm in the Lord'.

Jesus talks about his longing for the people of Jerusalem, that they would come to him and find a better way - that he could gather them in safely like a hen gathers her chicks. Later he will look down on Jerusalem with tears in his eyes - before giving himself up to those who have turned away from him.

Perhaps sometimes we have shared something of the longing of Paul and of Jesus for someone else -the longing that they would know God's love, and find his way - the way that leads to life. The song I played at the beginning - 'Let yourself' has some powerful words in the chorus. We've heard Martyn Joseph sing it and you can sense his longing for his audience to respond to those words...

But if you're drifting away

If it's falling apart...

Just let yourself,

Be quietly drawn by the stronger call of what you really love

Let your soul, the one that you brought with you safe to this moment in time

Whisper to your fears

And wrestle with the noise of this night, for you.

Let yourself,

Be quietly drawn by the stronger call of what you really love... Martyn Joseph has started a charity, helping people who are disadvantaged in different places around the world - reaching out to them through music and the arts and in practical ways. He has called it the 'Let yourself trust' after the song - I think this is him responding to the call of what he really loves - what he really cares about.

He says on his website: The Trust represents a vision I have had for some years now, of finding a way to help fund some very beautiful and life giving projects both here in the UK and globally. At the heart of the music I have had the privilege of playing for the last 30 years has been the common theme of justice and a chance for change fuelled by the ability to find love and hope in each other. I'm so thrilled that this is now coming to fruition in such a practical way.

The Trust helps fund Zac's place, working with homeless people in Swansea, and a theatre group for young people in Palestine, and a children's village in Guatemala - all projects full of a longing that people who face great challenges in their lives will be able to discover their full potential.

Thinking about these sorts of longings - Paul's longing, and Jesus' longing, and Martyn's longing, and our longing for our loved ones - it makes me wonder - what is God's longing - his deepest longing, for us? He loves us - he wants the best for us - he wants us to respond to that deeper call within us.

If we could imagine Jesus looking at us - holding our hands and looking deep into our eyes - maybe with tears in his own - what do we see in that look? What does he long

most deeply for us? Can we begin to sense it? And if we can, how do we want to respond?