

"This is the way. Walk in it." Isaiah chapter 30 verse 21

The singer/songwriter Graham Kendrick wrote a song years ago called "Is There Life on Earth" in which he pictures a man walking through a dismal cityscape contemplating life. "There must be happy lives," he thinks, "because you often see them advertised, they come free with the things you buy (at least that is the lie he likes to believe)."

We are surrounded by promises that the perfect life is possible. The way to it invariably involves buying into some product or service or other. Despite the images of deliriously happy people whose problems have all just been decisively solved because they've found the right toothpaste, it's perhaps no surprise that, in the real world, most people's lives are not dripping with joy and fulfilment.

But the prophet Isaiah says that God's people, though they may go through hard times, will hear a command behind them; "This is the way. Walk in it." Through the same prophet, God later assures them "The Lord is going before you, and the God of Israel is your rearguard."

How can we understand this in our busy, complex lives today? Perhaps the first thing we can do is to silence the clamour of voices demanding our attention in order to tune in to the voice of God, whose voice, we are told, is often a "still, small whisper." When we attune ourselves to God's voice we hear many intimations of his way, in which he promises to guide us to an abundant life in this world and eternal life in the next.

Perhaps the greatest insight that we can have is when we come to realise that the way spoken of by Isaiah is not a set of rules and regulations or instructions, nor is it a system of theological propositions. The great claim that he himself is "the way, the truth and the life" reveals that these things have more to do with a relationship than a technique. It is in relationship with God through faith in Jesus that we find our way to lives in which "rightness", not happiness is the primary goal. We will find that everything else springs from that.

If we are on a journey, there are a number of means by which we can find the way. We can ask directions, or follow a map, or even rely on our own innate sense of direction. Many of us can testify how unreliable all these can turn out to be. How much better to have a guide for our journey, who is always with us, showing us the way.

Prayer

Father, all too often I lose my way in life. I follow a way that seems to be right, but turns out to be a dead end, or leads me into trouble. Thank you that you are able to guide me in the way that I need to go in order to live a right life, and that you promise to be with me wherever I go. In Jesus' name, amen.

All these devotionals can be found on our website inghamitechurch.org on the 'Resources' page. Click on the link to go there.