

Devotions Thursday 17 March 2022– 3 weeks into the Ukraine-Russia War

Psalm 140: 1 – 3, 12 - 13

1 Rescue me, Lord, from evildoers;

protect me from the violent,

2 who devise evil plans in their hearts

and stir up war every day.

3 They make their tongues as sharp as a serpent's;

the poison of vipers is on their lips.

12 I know that the Lord secures justice for the poor

and upholds the cause of the needy.

13 Surely the righteous will praise your name,

and the upright will live in your presence.

We are three weeks into a terrible conflict that has seen the loss of far too many lives and the destruction of homes, schools, hospitals and other non-military buildings. As much as Russia has justified this war based on claims that the Ukrainians were committing genocide against those who were pro-Russia in the Donetsk and Luhansk regions, and then later that Ukraine is developing biological weapons, neither justify their attacks on civilians and especially hospitals. Most of these claims have been repudiated by credible experts. While the author of Psalm 140 wrote these words a very long time ago, they fit the description of what Russia has been doing.

We have heard many false truths presented and the people of Russia are bombarded with this one sided view of the conflict and those who stand up against this capture of the media and the war itself, are arrested, detained and fined. When Russia was asked to defend its claims of genocide before the International Court of Justice, they refused to appear but they continue to plot and spread false information. We pray for an end to the poison that comes from their lips.

We watch on in horror as so many people are forced to leave their homes, their lives and jobs in order to escape to safety and so we pray for justice for them, we pray that God will uphold their cause. We pray that God will bring an end to this conflict that allows the Ukrainians to return to their country and begin to rebuild their lives as the democratic country they were less than a month ago. It does seem to be an impossible ask and so if this situation is resolved and God grants our prayers, may we with loud voices unashamedly praise God for what he has done.

## Prayer

Lord God, we come again in prayer for the people of Ukraine.

We pray for the millions of displaced people trying to find place to patch together their shattered lives.

We pray for the fathers, sons, brothers who have remained behind to defend the freedom of Ukraine and the homes that are still left standing.

We pray for those who have stayed behind to look after those who are frail or sick and unable to travel.

We pray that you give them the courage and strength to face each day. Comfort them when they are afraid and protect them from harm.

Lord we pray for justice for them and that you will end this war and allow them to rebuild their lives.

We pray for those who devise evil plans, change their hearts, O God,

We pray for those who spread disinformation and who create lies to justify their greed and lust for power, change their hearts, O God.

We pray for those who knowingly fire on civilians, residential areas, schools and hospitals, change their hearts, O God.

May they turn from their wicked ways and follow your path of peace and humility instead.

We especially pray for Marina Ovsyannikova, the Russian journalist who bravely defied the Kremlin on Russian TV protesting the war and telling the Russian public that the government was lying to them. We thank you for her courage in speaking truth to power and trying to share the truth with many who have been kept in the dark. We ask that you will keep her and the thousands of other protesters in Russia who have been detained safe. We pray for a new government in Russia that promotes freedom and liberty instead of control and oppression.

In Jesus name, we pray,

Amen.

Rev KS Brown