

**'Each one will be like a shelter from the wind and a refuge from the storm, like streams of water in the desert and the shadow of a great rock in a thirsty land.' Isaiah 32:2**

What a beautiful and joyous time as many of us met with the Lord in prayer over 24 hours. So wonderful to gather on Zoom for Prayer & Praise and such a blessing to see Jan and Richard Zooming in from Kumi and feel a part of their ministry as we prayed over their missionary work in Uganda. So wonderful to hear from Alex and pray into Iona's mission work over the weekend and the main 'Send' event on Sunday at Wembley Arena where thousands of young people worshipped, received teaching and were commissioned to go out and share the gospel of love. What a joy to know the hope conveyed in the beautiful words of Isaiah 32:2, and a privilege and encouragement to pray together and hear how God, as we sang, our 'Way Maker', had 'made a way' in each other's lives.

These OCOD times of prayer are so precious, as seen in Sonia's reflection,

**'As always, a wonderful hour of prayer. I am determined to do this every day, half an hour or an hour of prayer, as I really feel my Heavenly Father's presence with me. Thank you, Diane, for organising this each month, it means so much to me, in our busy, busy lives. With love.'**

These OCOD times of prayer are powerful as seen in James' reflection of his 2-3am slot,

**'I was woken by the storm just before my alarm went off! Unlike last month, my hour was rich.**

**Front of my mind were the results of the election and the new generation of politicians that our nation has elected. I started reading Isaiah 32 and eagerly prayed v1 "See, a king will reign in righteousness and rulers will rule with justice." and was encouraged by this month's verse v2.**

**But this turned to shock in the middle of the chapter with the damning prophecies about the complacent people of Jerusalem. Before ending in hope "*till the Spirit is poured out on us from on high*".**

**It was a pleasure to pray for the different Mission Direct projects and people. Also, for encouragement for the different families and their worries and stresses that we prayed for during Prayer & Praise.**

**Whilst praying in hope for our nation, I had to search a bit to find my copy of Amanda Gorman's *The Hill We Climb*. Amanda is the young poet in the bright yellow coat and red hat whose charisma upstaged Joe Biden at his inauguration. (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jp9pyMqnBzk>)**

**Reading this beautiful poem again brought me to tears. It ends:**

***"...our people, diverse and beautiful, will emerge, battered and beautiful.***

***When day comes, we step out of the shade, aflame and unafraid.***

***The new dawn blooms as we free it.***

***For there is always light,***

***if only we're brave enough to see it.***

***If only we're brave enough to be it."***

**Lord, in your name.'**

These OCOD times of prayer provide opportunities to receive God's wisdom, and comfort and guidance as seen in Angela's reflection,

**'During my hour of prayer, I drove past this sign outside a church: 'Not all storms come to disrupt our lives, some come to clear our path.' Very relevant to the bible verse this weekend, may we all be blessed with the strengthening and cleansing of our hearts and gain wisdom and peace from life's**

**storms,**   ,

And in Anita's,

**'I was struck by the feeling that whatever is going on in politics at home and abroad, we are held in the Father's love and that he is still in charge, whether seen or unseen.'**

And in Ann's,

**'Towards the end of my hour, I was not praying anything particular, and found myself thinking of 'the floating axe head' and looking this up found it in 2Kings 6:5-7... when Elisha caused the dropped axe head to float to the surface of the water, so that it could be used again and returned, as it was a borrowed one. Showing God's care and provision in the everyday events, for those who trust in Him. He is always present to us, always there for us...much to ponder on ...'**

Huge thanks to those who shared their reflections. May we continue to encourage one another to persevere in prayer and enjoy the fruits of encountering the Lord in this intimate way.

With love  
Diane x