

## Thought for the Day 4th September - John Reed

Read Psalm 103:1-19

This passage may be familiar to anyone who has attended a funeral. Verses 15-17 are quoted in the funeral service:

*As for man, his days are like grass;  
he flourishes like a flower of the field;  
for the wind passes over it, and it is gone,  
and its place knows it no more.  
But the steadfast love of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear him ...*

These words came to me this week, not at a funeral, but when I read the news story of the 3-year-old girl in Taiwan who was caught in the strings of a kite as it was released on a gusty day, and carried dozens of metres into the air before frantic rescuers managed to pull her back to earth.<sup>1</sup> Thankfully, the little girl was frightened but physically unharmed. It could so easily have turned out much, much, worse.

It gives one pause for thought, doesn't it? A simple gust of wind, and a life can be swept away. It highlights just how fragile and fleeting life in this world is. The Psalmist is right. We flourish like a flower, and then the wind blows and we're gone.

But that's not the end of the Psalmist's message. It's not just a message of doom and hopelessness – to quote a philosopher in my household: “life sucks, and then you die.” No, the Psalmist's message is a message of hope and faith. It's a message about a God who transcends this fleeting life, who has established his throne in the heavens and whose kingdom rules over all (v. 19). This vast, unshakable, eternal God reaches out to us with steadfast love and mercy (v. 4) which is as high as the heavens are above the earth (v. 11) and is from everlasting to everlasting for those who fear him (v. 17). He is merciful and gracious (v. 8), and he redeems our life from the pit (v. 4).

Far from a despairing reflection on the fragility of life that is blown away so easily by the wind, it's an assurance that we are in the hands of a God whose love will never fail us.

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-08-31/girl-in-taiwan-lifted-into-the-air-during-kite-accident/12611426>