

Dear Friends

As with many of you I went to sleep last night disturbed for all the images we had seen from Washington yesterday. Scenes of chaos, anger, vandalism, rioting, hatred, fear, and violence. All this and much more. It was a restless night.

But when I awoke this morning and was walking outside before the dawn I realized that one thought, one memory, had separated itself from all the other thoughts that were competing for my attention. It was this:

*For what does it profit anyone to gain the whole world and lose their soul/life? Matthew 16:26*

The President of the United States wants to gain the whole world. He wants it all for himself, he wants the wealth, the power, the influence, the adulation. He has an insatiable appetite for being praised and worshipped and when now confronted by the prospect of losing it all, he grows ever more dangerous. For when he loses the world he so desperately covets he will find he has no soul left.

Oddly enough yesterday could have been much worse. There have been places of greater violence and riots that have resulted in far more bloodshed. What we saw unfold at the US Capitol in Washington wasn't especially well planned and it wasn't well led. It was a riot which by definition is uncontrolled. It was naked chaos stoked and incited by someone who wants to gain the whole world, for himself alone, and who freely uses false witness and violence as tools to have others gain for him what he cannot gain for himself.

There are many ways to describe the pathologies of Donald Trump but included among them must be the recognition that he is spiritually immature. By that I mean that there is no external evidence that he is ever motivated by his soul. Rather he reacts only to the impulses of his ego. There is no evidence in his public life that he has any capacity for empathy (the feelings of others) or for self-reflection (the ability to judge one's own actions). Yesterday he addressed a large group of followers, rallied by a relentless two month attack on truth and nurtured in their fear and hatred, and told them they could take back what was stolen. A tower of lies. He even said that he would lead them but when the mob reached their target the soul-less man was nowhere to be found.

Our American friends are our neighbours. We know them well. We welcome them often. We visit them in their homeland. Sadly, many of our neighbours have fallen victim to the sway of falsehood and justify the seductive lure of violence. It is once more time to love our neighbours and hold them in prayer. Perhaps the scenes of yesterday will do more to shake the shackles from the eyes of many than any number of pleas or prayers could do.

But in addition to prayers, perhaps in this moment we might re-commit ourselves to the power of truth. Of calling a lie, a lie. Of the need to stand firm against those who clearly wish the whole world for themselves. Let us announce in word and deed that the world is the Lord's and the fullness thereof.

It is scripture that says *the truth will set you free* (John 8:32) and freedom is a blessing for all people of every nation.

Grace and peace,

Michael