



Create a peaceful space to pause, and allow yourself to feel God's presence alongside you, as near to you as your own breath. In following the reflection below, as a church we will draw closer to God and to one another as we grow in faith and deepen our sense of belonging to God.

2 Kings 6:16

'Fear not, for those who are with us, are greater than those who are with them.'

There was a picture in the *Radio Times* years ago of a football pitch, with the usual 11 players on one side, but 40 players on the other! The result of the game seemed a foregone conclusion. The caption read, 'The more you have, the better your chance of winning' (an advert for Premium Bonds)!

There is a feeling of strength in numbers, whether at the centre of a large protest march or among a large crowd of home supporters at the match. If we are honest, most of us like to operate from a position of strength. We feel reassured if our defence forces have the latest weapons to deter any potential aggressor.



But what about when the Tsunami rolls in – the unexpected visitor ready to overwhelm everything before it, as does the virus that threatens the lives of everyone of us. Perhaps the story in 2 Kings 6 should bring us some reassurance. It recounts how the Syrian army had surrounded the Israelites threatening to

destroy them. Elisha's servant felt overwhelmed, panic-stricken, resigned to arrest and inevitable death: 'Alas my master, what shall we do?'

Elisha's response is 'Fear not, for those who are with us, are greater than those who are with them.' He displays courage and confidence in God to face and overcome the threat at the city gates which eventually sees the enemy defeated.

Just as Elisha's servant saw a huge army at the city gates, ready to destroy his life, so it is easy for us to feel threatened by forces in our society which seek to undermine our way of life. There is an unseen enemy on our doorsteps at this moment, ready to invade and threaten our very lives. Maybe this is the time to affirm and display our confidence in a God who is working through us all to defeat it.

It's easy to be tempted to think we face forces that will one day destroy the peace and order of the lifestyles we enjoy, to think the forces against us are greater than those for us, but our journey to the cross through Lent reminds us that we are an Easter people for whom resurrection and new life is God's unfailing promise to us. For years we have been singing and proclaiming our faith. Now is the moment to show that confidence as we face the challenges with those around us

Prayer:

Help us to follow you on the road to Jerusalem
to set our faces firmly against friendly suggestions
for a safe, expedient life, to embrace boldly the way
of self-offering, of life given for others' gain:

Help us to follow you out of the dark tomb,
to share daily your resurrection life,
to be renewed daily in your image of love,
to be used daily as your body in service to the world

Help us follow you with confidence, Christ the servant.