

THE GRAPEVINE – Issue 58:7th May 2021

Dear Friends,

I have been reading through the Psalms recently; hence me doing a series on the Psalms for our Sunday worship. Last Sunday we looked at Psalm 139. As I prepared what I had to say I was particularly struck by verse 5:

***You hem me in behind and before,
and you lay your hand upon me.***

The Hebrew for 'hem in' is not like a wonderful loving embrace. It's not like the great-big-bear-hug that many of us have missed over this last year. The Hebrew word is used elsewhere of 'besieging' a city. You hem me in, you beleaguer me, you hedge me in.

As I reflected on verse 5 I remembered some 3 or 4 years ago a group of passersby were pictured waiting with a man to stop him from jumping from a bridge in Golders Green, North London. They saw the man preparing to jump from a bridge and held him for two hours until emergency crews arrived on the scene.



Take a look at the picture. Look how tightly they're holding him. Look how tightly they're holding his head and shoulders. One man is holding his belt, another his legs. Some have even tied rope around his body and legs to secure him to the railings until the emergency services could arrive. Each person holds on to different parts of his body, refusing to let him go. What tenacious kindness! None of the people who helped had known each other before the incident – but they all stayed with the man for the two hours.

It is an astonishing display of humanity. But it is also like a living parable which reminds us how astonishing God's love is that he holds us so tight and will not let us go. Such persistent kindness, such tenacious love, such steadfast love, never diminishing in volume, never weakening in strength, never retreating, never tainted. Though we may feel alone or unloved, reality is different - his love endures forever.

Thanks be to God

May God's richest blessing be yours

