

As I look over my life so far, am painfully aware of my failure and my sin.

Do I really believe that Jesus is *the Christ of God*?

Am I really pleased to renounce myself and to die with Jesus?

Do I take up the Cross of Jesus day by day or do I settle for something a little more sedate and undemanding?

Am I following Jesus or am I following my own desires?

Am I busy losing my life or saving it?

This painful awareness of failure is with me all the time. It is mourning for lost years, for lost opportunities, for loves that have not been fulfilled. It is like *the mourning of Haddad-rimon in the plain of Megiddo*. As I look on the one we *have pierced*, as I look on Jesus, I could weep *as people weeping for a first-born child*.

And yet, and yet, I know that God is with me. I know that he has been my help. I know that his right hand holds me fast. He pours out his spirit of kindness and prayer over and over. He has made me his Son. He has made me a brother of Jesus.

So, personal failure, on the one hand, and an overwhelming sense of the presence of God on the other. But what I have come to realise in recent years is that sense of failure and this sense of God's presence are one and the same.

It is precisely our tears and our mourning that will save us. *When that day comes, a fountain will be opened for the House of David and the citizens of Jerusalem*. Our tears of repentance **is** that fountain given to us by God, and it is **that** fountain that is *for sin and impurity*, **that** fountain that will take **away** *the sin and impurity*. This **is** *his spirit of kindness and prayer*.

It is precisely in dying that we will truly live, in renouncing ourselves that we find ourselves, in losing my life that I save it, in mourning my failure that I find my salvation, in my tears that I find forgiveness and healing, in facing up to all the negativity and darkness that I find peace and light, in accepting who I am that I find a joy that is beyond all explaining.

*O God, you are my God, for you I long;
for you my soul is thirsting...*