

20<sup>th</sup> June 2020

## Escape

**“Our soul is escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowlers:  
the snare is broken, and we are escaped.”**

*Bible, Psalm 124:7*

Port Seton harbour used to be teeming with fishing boats as the Herring Fleets followed the best fishing along the east coast. It's still a working harbour, though the fishing now is a fraction of what it was, with most of the boats searching for shellfish. So that's why our harbour is full of creels: stacked neatly on the key-side; piled up waiting to be repaired; being baited ready for the next trip to sea. These creels are for lobster fishing – the *crème de la crème* of the shellfish haul. A lobster creel is a cunning device with a tunnel of netting in each side. Once the lobster – or more than one on a good day – is enticed into creel by the bait, it can't get out again. The tunnel is one-way, and the lobster is trapped!

I feel that I'm trapped just now. Restrictions placed on me hold me in a set of circumstances I don't want to be in. There was no bait to lure me, but I've come through a tunnel into a place which makes me afraid. Unlike the lobster, I know I'll be released in time to be able to do what I want to do once more. But for now, what do I do about feeling trapped?

The writer of Psalm 124 was afraid. His people knew about entrapment: pressed on every side; swallowed up by the waters; a prey to their foes. And yet the Psalmist could say: the trap is broken; we have an escape; our soul can be free. The trap for him was physical, but despite that, in his soul, the core of his being, he had already found freedom – in meaning and purpose, self-belief and his faith in God.

The artist J M W Turner, after experiencing a storm on a Margate Steamer, wrote: *I did not expect to escape, but I felt bound to record it if I did.* He did just that in the beauty of his paintings. In our entrapment, though we may fear there is no escape, our soul *can* find freedom. Are we not bound, then, to record that and be thankful when it happens?

### **A prayer for today**

*Loving God, when I am afraid, give me peace; when I express my fears, be patient with me; when there's no escape, bless me with a freedom for my soul. Amen*

*An original reflection by © Tom Gordon*

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