

Read the text of the Archbishop of Canterbury's 'Thought For The Day' on BBC Radio 4's Today programme this morning.

What a life. What an extraordinary life.

And yet the death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II is a shock to our sense of permanence, because of her long and steadfast reign, which helped us make sense of our identity as a nation. It was a reign that was not only for the United Kingdom. It was a reign that was for the whole world. Round the world in the work I do I hear so many people who spoke of her not as anything other than The Queen. She showed us permanence. She gave us a sense that life wouldn't change, and so with her death, we feel that permanence is rocked. And for many of us it is almost impossible to imagine a world without her.

For all those who yesterday found themselves bereaved in their own families or from their own friends, because many other people died yesterday, they will know especially that sense of great loss, the uncertainty, the loss of identity, the fading of what seemed permanent.

But that is the lie of death.

For Her Late Majesty showed us that when we build our lives on God's faithfulness, we are on the solid ground of eternity that cannot be shaken.

In Coventry Cathedral hangs a tapestry called 'Christ in Glory'. It is an image of Christ after his death, resurrection and ascension, but with the wounds of the Cross. It's 80-foot high, and between his feet is an almost life size human figure. That figure can't see Jesus. That figure is looking out from between the feet. He can only see the mark of the nails in the feet.

They are vulnerable, exposed, unprotected, but they are sheltered by the Christ they cannot see.

In times of grief, fear, or vulnerability, we can cling to the wounded feet of Christ. It is offered to all of us.

We can look out at the world, and can find that our lives can be abundant, as Her Late Majesty's was, that our lives can find hope, even in the face of death.

We remember today especially the Royal Family in their grief. We pray for the reign of His Majesty King Charles III. He will feel especially the weight of this change.

In the Christian story of life, death, and resurrection, there is space for our grief and uncertainty. We see the wounds of Christ who died with us. But with God, the final words are abundant life and fulfilled hope. And in Her Majesty's life we saw that and can be inspired.

3 min read

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**Source URL:** <https://www.archbishopofcanterbury.org/speaking-writing/speeches/her-majesty-queen-archbishop-justin-delivers-thought-day>