

St James News: Thought for the day - Tuesday 9th June 2020

Thought for the day - by Rev John Marshall

The first Johnny Cash record I bought was the recording of his concert at Folsom Prison. In among "Egg sucking dog", Folsom Prison Blues and the sounds of prison, he sings a song by one of the prisoners, Glen Shirley, "That old grey chapel".

I remember these lines clearly "Inside the walls of prison my body may be, but the Lord has set my soul free."

Looking back Johnny Cash writes "And memories; "The look on Glen Shirley's face as I announced his song. He goes on "I'm singing sweet hymns to them of mother, Jesus, freedom, children. But of course the walls as well, and the joyous most sacred, freedom of the spirit."

One of my favourite Johnny Cash songs is "Half a mile a day". There is a story that is told of how he visits a church after a concert just in time for the testimonies, as each one tries to outdo the other in how they are going to heaven. A little old lady raises her face and prayerfully said

"I'm coming Lord
For my heavenly reward
I'm on my way to you
Can you see me coming through?
Through clouds of persecution
And stumblin' on the way
But I expect, I'm makin' 'bout
A half a mile a day." Johnny Cash Personal File

Also on this CD he imagines sitting down to talk to Paul and sings of Jesus and the woman at the well in, "Have a drink of water".

Johnny Cash was another singer song writer who shared his faith; and was able to reach, with words of faith and many human emotions beyond the walls of a church.

Perhaps the words of Glen Shirley are appropriate to us in these locked down days.

Bible Verses: [John 4:1-42](#)

Song: [Have a drink of water by Johnny Cash](#)