Women's Breakfast with Helen Thorne

God is our refuge and strength,
an ever-present help in trouble *Psalm 46: 1*

Helen began by sharing something of her life before BCUK. At university, life was very much out of control, she spoke of facing some pretty tough situations growing up. There were times where she felt all hope was gone and she was struggling to make sense of life. Thankfully, God had placed around her some great friends, some of whom were people of faith and over time, Helen came to put her trust in Jesus. She became involved London City Mission and later with Biblical Counselling UK. Helen loves to help people connect the realities of life to the riches of Scripture and her desire is that her speaking engagements and the books she writes enable people to look to Jesus for real hope and encouragement.

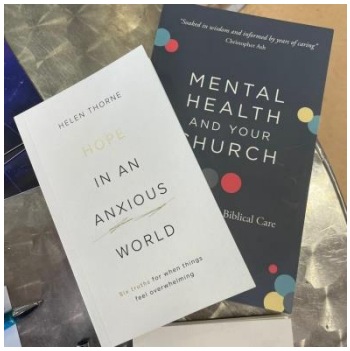
Helen certainly did this on Saturday as she spoke of how we can find hope in Jesus as our rock and refuge in the middle of the anxiety that so many of us experience. The reality is that life hurts. We often experience discord with those around us and a disconnection from the world in which we live because, ultimately, we have a broken relationship with God. We live with a sense that all is not quite as it should be. All of us have been on the receiving end of words and actions which have brought pain and we have said and done things which have caused hurt to those around us as well.

However, it is not just the stuff coming at us which hurts. Our bodies themselves can fail us at every turn. Some of us might be generally fit and well but most of us have experienced debilitating illness at times. Our illness might be serious or we might recover fully, however the anxiety can remain and one day we all need to face our own mortality.

But it is not just the things that come at us in life or the things that go wrong in us that can cause us to become anxious. Desires which come out of us can affect us to the core. We can

relentlessly put pressure on ourselves to obtain things we do not need or desperately want, often at the expense of the relationships around us. Disappointment, despair and stress often ensue.

Where then can we turn? Helen beautifully drew our attention back to Jesus, the one who can give us the new perspective and the new power we need. We were reminded that God is not remote and impersonal but deeply involved in his world. He knows who is hurting and what is wrong. He cares about the way we have both received pain and at times caused it. He understands our relationships are not as they should be and that our bodies are broken – and yet He has a plan to make all things new.

Helen was realistic. Being a Christian does not mean that we are anxiety-free. There are many stories of Christians who battle anxiety in their lives. But we are not alone in our pain. Helen addressed the lies we can often wrongly believe about ourselves, lies such as we are too messed up for God to help us, lies that we feel too guilty, too weak, too exhausted. God wants us to know something better than these lies, He wants us to know Himself, who alone can lead us to a place of safety.

For more on this topic, you can buy Hope in an Anxious World by Helen Thorne or do see Joanna Hill who can order a copy for you.