

Sunday 19th September 2021

Readings & Reflection and suggested hymns for use in church

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Readings

Psalm 1 (Psalms for a quantum world)

In all things there is choice;
to be one with creation
or apart from creation.
To be one with all people
or apart from all people.
To belong or not belong.

When we choose to be one
we are bound in love,
for our world, for each other,
for God, the source of all being.
In giving we receive
and our lives are fulfilled.

When we choose to be apart
we become bound by fear,
seeing others against us,
learning to defend our ground,
hoarding what we perceive to be ours.
We do not know which way to turn.

In all things there is choice.
Choose wisely.
Choose love.

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James 3:13-4:3 (Read the New Living translation [here](#))

Reflection

Imagine there are two parcels on the table in front of you – similar sizes and both rattle when you shake them. One is wrapped in gift wrapping and tied with a bow, the other is wrapped in brown paper and tied with string. You can choose to open one parcel which will you choose?

Psalm 1 reminds us that in all things there is a choice and our reading from James reminds us that how we make the choice is important, and that we should be guided by wisdom. Does wisdom help with the choice of box? Sometimes the most amazing things come in the ordinary, they can be so ordinary that we overlook them. On the other hand, when we open our eyes and see the wonders of creation we wonder how we missed them as they are so spectacular.

Take a moment to consider how you make decisions, perhaps you find it difficult to make decisions. Does this passage from James offer any insights? Wisdom informs our decision making, but there is worldly wisdom and spiritual wisdom. Some of the decisions reported on in the news recently make good examples of worldly wisdom which is often driven by greed, selfishness and other non-loving emotions. Spiritual wisdom is born of love, the desire to offer the best we can and think of others and their needs before our own needs. Spiritual wisdom often does not come naturally, and we must train ourselves to think carefully when making choices. We may think that our choice to buy the latest model of a phone, a computer or car is a personal choice and affects no one else, but it does if it creates more waste, or landfill, or affects our ability to give more generously. In fact, almost every choice we make affects other people in some way, so it makes sense to take time over our decisions and ensure they are as loving as possible.

Wisdom is more than knowledge, wisdom is how we choose to use the knowledge we have.

Watch this video to explore this more – watch [here](#)

The video mentions gaining wisdom from studying the Bible and there are many examples of wisdom in the Bible, but we need to study beyond the words and understand the message we receive from the stories, and context is often very important. For example, many passages from the Bible have been taken out of context and used in the debate on human sexuality but the context is very important and explains the wisdom of the passage. Attitudes to, and knowledge of our humanity have changed from biblical times and the understandings that drove the writers to express things the way they did are no longer applicable to life today. Spiritual wisdom comes from knowing God, and knowing God means living a loving life. Knowing God is different from knowledge of God, it is a relationship which grows as we explore our oneness with creation and learn to be loving people. Within oneness we recognise God's presence in everything and everyone and so in wisdom we come to understand that in a war

God is with both sides which changes our view and our expectations. Wisdom tells us that it never a good decision to resort to war.

Sometimes we feel trapped into making a wrong decision and we need all the wisdom of God to ensure the right decision is made.

[Watch](#) this video which is a parable about wisdom.

Take a moment to consider how some of the recent stories in the news reflect worldly wisdom and how we might challenge this with spiritual wisdom.

Toward the end of the film Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade, Jones meets the ancient Knight Templar who guards the "Holy Grail". Jones's mission is to find the grail but in front of him are many choices, gold cups, platinum, silver, terra cotta and wood, which is the Holy Grail? The knight says, "you must choose, but choose wisely, for as the real grail brings eternal life, the false grail brings death". As always Indian Jones is being chased by the bad guys, who also want the Holy Grail. As Jones contemplates his choice the baddie arrives and without pause reaches out for the glittering golden cup. "Truly the cup of a king", he says, and drinks from it. With several horrific transformations, he deteriorates and turns to dust. The knight looks at Jones and simply says "He chose poorly". Jones selects a wooden cup "The cup of a Galilean carpenter" he says, and with much trepidation, having seen the previous result, he drinks from it. "You choose wisely" says the knight.

Earlier I asked you which box you would choose to open. The box in the fancy wrapping contains dried peas, useful but not very exciting, the box in brown paper contains Maltesers! We should not be drawn by the glitter of the world but allow the love of God to guide our choices. Wisdom will lead us to the kingdom, where justice and joy enable life in all its fullness, the path is the path of life and is not paved with gold.

Suggested Hymns

May the mind of Christ my Saviour

Holy wisdom lamp of learning (Ruth Duck) – listen [here](#)

Climate Change contemplation

Hymn - Where are the voices by Shirley Erena Murray – read the words [here](#)