

Sunday 26th May 2024

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God is love, let us adore God by sharing God's love.

God is ever present, around us and within us, we worship together in God.

Reading [Isaiah 6:1-8 \(CEV\)](#)

Reflection

If you have ever watched dad's Army you will be familiar with the phrase 'we're doomed, we're all doomed'. That is the reaction of Isaiah upon witnessing the glory of God in the temple, a reaction that stems from the belief that no one can see God and live, but also a reaction from the perspective that none of us is perfect.

In the vision Isaiah receives forgiveness and he is overwhelmed, so much so that when he hears God ask who should he send He puts his hand up as quickly as a child being asked who want a sweetie?

The message of Jesus is all about forgiveness and we are assured that God's forgiveness is unconditional, but are we overwhelmed and how do we respond?

We talk about being called which is another way of saying we have heard God and acknowledge his call to change the way we do things. We talk about being called but are we as quick to respond as Isaiah? We should be, for the message of Jesus although simple in nature is powerful in its meaning and the call is to share the message in word and in deed. To be as enthusiastic as Isaiah, in how we respond and change direction. Repentance means to change direction, and repentance is the only response to God's unconditional and merciful love.

Reading [John 3:1-12 \(The Message\)](#)

Reflection

In Romans 8:14-17a, Paul says,

¹⁴For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God. ¹⁵For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received a spirit of adoption. When we cry, "Abba! Father!" ¹⁶it is that very Spirit bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God, ¹⁷and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with the Christ'

Paul has worked out that there is something more to humanity than mere flesh and blood. Jesus is talking about this in his conversation with Nicodemus. To explore this passage let's explore four questions.

1. How do you view miracles?

Nicodemus says only someone of God could do the things he has heard Jesus has done. Do you believe in miracles? I was asked that question during a question and answer session at the South Western Synod's Women's Conference in 2011. My reply was that if I had been asked a couple of years before I would probably have said no, that there was some alternative explanation. However, as I had begun reading about quantum theology and connectiveness my answer then and now is yes I do believe. Miracles are a change in reality. If we do not believe that is possible then why and how do we expect the kingdom to come? When we pray for peace are we not praying for a change in reality? How that prayer is answered is another matter but surely we are praying for a miracle?

We are reminded that there are always a different ways of viewing things and responding to things. How we approach a challenge does affect the outcome, if we expect the worst we will probably get the worst, if we expect the best we will probably get a better outcome. It is the same when we approach people. We are called to look for God in everyone, to look for the best in everyone and that does change how we relate to people.

2. What does it mean to be born from above?

Nicodemus takes a confused approach to this question, perhaps deliberately misinterpreting what Jesus is saying. How much do we live out our baptism, how much do we live as connected people? Jesus is differentiating between our flesh and blood existence and our connected existence.

God is one, God is everything and creation is held in reality by bonds of energy. Quantum science is demonstrating the connectedness of creation, evidence that atoms can be in more than one place at the same time, and we are made of atoms! Evidence that DNA held hundreds of miles away from our bodies reacts at the same time as we react when reacting to emotive situations, once connected it can never be separated. People who receive blood transfusions or transplants often find they have new skills, through the new DNA connection a different experience.

We are part of God if we believe that God is everything. We are part of the connectedness that is the Spirit, the energy which binds us together. It is only when we acknowledge that and explore its potential that we begin to understand what it means to be born of the Spirit, a term used 2000 years ago to explain something for which we have only recently discovered a new language. Most of what we know is energy and something is only solid if we believe it is solid and act as if it is solid. It is again how we respond to things that creates our reality but most of that is subliminal and we are not conscious of what we are doing. Jesus calls us to be conscious of our reactions, to respond as people of the Spirit, people of connectedness.

3. How is 'the wind blows where it chooses an expression of Spirit Living'?

Jesus chooses to use the metaphor of the wind to demonstrate how little we know about oneness. The wind as understood 2000 years ago was a mysterious phenomenon, and to some extent it still is. Meteorologically we know more about the origins of weather phenomenon, including typhoons and tornadoes but it is still very difficult to predict when and where they will happen or the path they will follow. I remember standing on the shore at Balmaha on Loch Lomond and watching as the tail of a tornado formed over the hills in the opposite side of the loch, it was both fascinating and frightening. Fortunately the tail never touched ground and so it dissipated without causing any destruction.

There is the sense of unknowing in this phrase, and we are being reminded that we cannot see within people with our eyes, we cannot know if someone is responding to the Spirit unless we see the evidence of their response in their words and actions. It is the same for people viewing us, they can only see our response to the Spirit through our words and actions.

4. How do we know, and how do we speak and testify to what we know?

Nicodemus was a Pharisee, he was learned in the Scriptures and the Law and Jesus reminded him that he, Jesus, was only speaking of things he knew and had experienced. It is often the case that we feel bereft of knowledge, or perhaps use a lack of knowledge as an excuse but if we are people of God, if we are responding to the call to acknowledge our oneness then part of that is acknowledging that potentially we know everything, but we are still learning how to access that knowledge. That is part of our Spirit life. This means that we are called to explore every experience from all angles and discern what we believe because of the experience and then be ready to share that with others. We can be quite lazy about this, or we can take the wrong message from an experience.

We have a choice. To live as people of God, recognising our oneness and our call to be there for others, and live out our belief in change. Or, accept the reality we have been a part of building, a reality that does not reflect love in the world, and believe we can do nothing.

We are not told the outcome of Nicodemus's visit at the end of our reading but in John 7, we read of him defending Jesus before the other Pharisees and in John 19 he assists in Jesus' burial. I believe his encounter with Jesus set him on a different path.

Last week was Pentecost and today is Trinity Sunday when we reflect upon the relational nature of God. The language may change and traditional language be challenged in the face of new understanding and an awareness of different people's experiences of human relationships but today is a day to remember the bonds that hold us. St Augustine spoke of this in the words 'The one who loves, the one who is loved and that which binds them together', which I think is a beautiful starting point for our understanding of God as relationship.