

Sunday 4th August 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.

Readings 2 Samuel 11:26 – 12:13a
 Ephesians 4:1-16
 John 6:24-35

Reflection

The perception of those around was that David had overstepped the mark but we are given the impression that David did not see it that way. The prophet Nathan approaches David with a story. It is a story about two men from different backgrounds and the injustice one imparts on the other. David is outraged on behalf of the victim and rages against the perpetrator. Nathan then points out that David has done the same.

David is silenced, what can he say? Nathan pushes home the point by reminding David of his story, his background and all that God has done for him, asking him if he has wanted for anything. He then passes on the message from then on there will be trouble for David. Perhaps not surprisingly, David admits his wrongdoing against God and Nathan tells him he is forgiven. However, there will be consequences and the child he bore with Bathsheba will die.

It can be difficult to reconcile parts of this story with our understanding of God, but at its heart is the evidence that we can all be tempted. We can all stray from the path to varying degrees, sometimes without realising we are doing so and nearly always our actions have a negative effect on someone. It can take someone else, or something, to open our eyes and show us the reality of what we are doing. We can all need a Nathan.

God forgives but that does not negate the consequences of our actions and sometimes we struggle to let go of the guilt and both can affect our future experiences. Would the child have died anyway, possibly, but David behaved differently because of his guilt.

Many associate Psalm 51 with David's expression of guilt and remorse and in it we read the line 'Create in me a clean heart and put a new and right spirit within me', a prayer of turning around and seeking to head in a new direction. Paul gives an example of that direction in his letter to the Ephesians. At the heart of the section we read today is this message.

Lead a life worthy of your calling, a life of humility, gentleness and patience towards others, making every effort to show love and create unity. Use your skills, and you all have different skills, use them for the benefit of unity, creating peace and harmony as far as you are able. Hold fast to your calling, and together grow deeper in your relationships with God and each other.

Humility, gentleness and patience. This is about acknowledging the skills of others, encouraging each other to grow in confidence, valuing other people's opinions, being kind to each other and do nothing that harms another. Move gently, explore ideas, listen carefully and decide together. Don't rush ahead, wait and journey together wherever possible. This is what consensus is about.

Nathan reminded David of all that God had provided, and in John 6 the author is reminding the people of God's generosity. Jesus uses the experience of feeding the 5000 to highlight this important point. It is, perhaps, another strand in Jesus' message about interdependence. Quantum science is showing us more and more about our humanity and one key aspect of our need to give, we are made for giving, our bodies are wired to respond positively to the act of giving. However, for us to experience that wonderful act of giving

someone has to be prepared to receive. That is interdependence, times of giving and times of receiving.

We all need to spend time 'learning God' as it will change lives. We are not called to believe in some superhuman, one off being, called Jesus. Rather we are called to believe in a person so fully human that they demonstrated all the possibilities for every human, someone who knew God so deeply that they were one. Jesus lived and breathed God and urged everyone to understand that this was what it was to be fully human. Moreover as more people embrace this idea and live in God then it becomes more likely that others will notice and change their ways. As that happens the world will move gently into a deeper peace, the kingdom. It all starts with humility, gentleness and patience, working together in God and consciously journeying in our humanity towards a deeper expression of our divinity.

Song There but for fortune ([Listen here](#))

Psalm 51 (Psalms for a quantum world)

The love that is God is merciful and unconditional,
holds no grudges but seeks to encourage a new life,
in which, through oneness, we recognise the hurt we cause
and seek to build a new relationship.

Only in the knowledge of our oneness do we find this new life.

A life filled with love born of honesty.

We must know ourselves through our relationships with others,
through our love for them,

and through seeking the best for them

we find our own new expression of our humanity.

We are never separate from the source of all being,
even when we feel alone.

When we open our eyes to the oneness in creation,
we open our minds to the power of our participation in creation.

In unity within community

all may know their oneness in God, the source of all being,
and creation reveal the glory of peace between all people.

The love that is God seeks only the unity of humanity,
through the flowering of relationships.

The love that is God breaks down the barriers of fear
and opens the gate to a new way of being,

a way of justice and freedom

through sharing the goodness of creation with friend and not yet friend.

The love that is God is eternal and in oneness we know that life is eternal,
and life is love.

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