



St Andrew's Parish Church Guernsey
Sunday 6 June 2021 – Trinity 1
Readings: 2 Corinthians 4: 13 to 5:1 & St Mark 3: 20-end
Given by Rev Juliette E C Robilliard

Halcyon days v the technology age

Looking back, when we were children, it seemed that we had such freedom! During school holidays my sisters and I might spend all day at Vazon. All before mobile phones were invented so no means of summoning parents for help if we got into any scrapes – not that we'd have admitted it anyway! Our luxury was to be given a shilling each to spend during the day. I always bought a Fanta, a packet of crisps and an ice lolly and then when I took the bottle back for the deposit, I could buy a Milky Way. Such simple freedom! By contrast, this last week I suffered two whole days without WIFI, as our high-tech router had broken down and I felt so constrained in so many ways! How like today's Collect I felt, "O God ... through the weakness of our mortal nature we can do no good thing without you." All this, gave me food for thought preparing my sermon.

What nourishes the best?

I realised how often we depend on items that have no spiritual worth hence, in Paul's letter to the Corinthians he urges them to '... look not at what can be seen but at what cannot be seen; for what can be seen is temporary, but what cannot be seen is eternal.' But how? Paul informs '... we have the same spirit of faith that is in accordance with the scripture'. The Word of God is fundamental to guiding our thoughts and nurturing our faith. Do you like me read it daily with bible notes? I use 'Reflections for Daily Prayer', which don't tell me what to think but rather prompt thought giving insights that reading the Bible alone does not always achieve. Broadening ones' perspective of scripture gives an even greater understanding of how great, generous, loving and forgiving our God is. I find these insights a blessing that sustain me when times are tough and life seems more of an endurance test than a matter of choice through forbearance. I think Paul must have found that also, when he said, 'So, we do not lose heart.' Relying on God's word empowers and encourages giving us the resolve to keep serving despite all.

Eternal promises - ever new

If, however, the Bible was just like any other book, after a time, it would become passé and ultimately a dead work. The reason that it is forever new is that it does not solely talk about events that happened so long ago that no one can recall them. The Bible always projects forwards pointing to a living person who was, and is and is to come: the person of our Lord Jesus Christ. The promised Messiah, who became incarnate in our flesh, who died, rose

again and ascended to heaven bridging the divide between us. There is also the promise of the end times when Christ will gather all of the faithful to him.

A tangible sign – strength for each day

We know all of this from the snippets we hear read at church on Sunday topped up by our own reading during the week. But how does the Word live within us and nourish us? And how do we believe things we cannot see? We need a tangible sign. Jesus gave us that sign when he instituted the sacrament of communion calling himself ‘The living bread that came down from heaven that whoever eats of this bread will live for ever in eternity.’ The sacrifice of his body and blood is his very living self. And so, here each Sunday Christ bids us come to gather before his table so that he might feed us with his living presence.

Open to the truth

Sadly, not everyone in his day or since grasps the significance of his sacrifice. In the Gospel of Mark, we heard that the crowd pressed in on Jesus such that ‘they could not even eat’ and so not nourished. Then the scribes arrived to have another go challenging Jesus’ perspective on scripture. Too often those who offer a fresh perspective are deemed to be sad, mad or bad and this is the view the scribes form judging Jesus to be possessed by Satan. Jesus points up the conflicting logic of their arguments but there are none so blind as those who won’t see. Even his own mother and brothers, fearing for his reason, try to draw him away. It takes a humble person with openness of heart and mind to consider that Jesus might be right after all, just as Nicodemus the Pharisee, whom we considered last week, deduced.

Word and Sacrament = God’s grace

Jesus by his tangible sacrament of sacrifice makes sense of the Word. If we believe in Spirit and in truth that he is the culmination of God’s Word, then as Jesus said ‘Whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother. Word and Sacrament come alive in Jesus, as summarised in the post communion prayer, which says:

Eternal Father, we thank you for nourishing
us with these heavenly gifts: may our communion
strengthen us in faith, build us up in hope, and
make us grow in love; for the sake of Jesus Christ
our Lord.

How much are we seeking to be nourished?

Amen.