

CUTTING EDGE CAMELOT, No 58

Wednesday 7th October 2020

‘Virtually Church but with some way to go...’

Welcome

Welcome to this midweek edition of Cutting Edge Camelot. Anna continues our series on James by reflecting on our relationship with God and with the world.

Scripture Passage

James 4.1-10

Those conflicts and disputes among you, where do they come from? Do they not come from your cravings that are at war within you? ² You want something and do not have it; so you commit murder. And you covet something and cannot obtain it; so you engage in disputes and conflicts. You do not have, because you do not ask. ³ You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, in order to spend what you get on your pleasures. ⁴ Adulterers! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God. ⁵ Or do you suppose that it is for nothing that the scripture says, “God yearns jealously for the spirit that he has made to dwell in us”? ⁶ But he gives all the more grace; therefore it says,

“God opposes the proud,
but gives grace to the humble.”

⁷ Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. ⁸ Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. ⁹ Lament and

mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned into mourning and your joy into dejection. ¹⁰ Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you.

Reflection

“Our relationship with God and the world”

I wonder if you have ever heard the Mac Davis song, ‘It’s Hard to be Humble’? The chorus goes like this:

*Oh Lord, it's hard to be humble
when you're perfect in every way.
I can't wait to look in the mirror
cos I get better-looking each day.
To know me is to love me,
I must be a hell of a man.
Oh Lord, it's hard to be humble,
but I'm doing the best that I can.*

This silly song raises a serious point: what does humility look like? While our Bible passage seems to touch on lots of different ideas and teachings, what binds it all together is this theme of humility. The dictionary defines humility as ‘freedom from pride or arrogance’, but a biblical definition might also refer to humility as primarily a recognition of who we are before God, as we acknowledge that God is God and we are not!

So how does the theme of humility help us understand this passage?

Verses 1-2 refer to the conflicts and disputes that arise when we don’t get what we want. We may not find ourselves plotting murder, but I wonder how often we feel angry with those who seem to be preventing us getting what we want? Maybe over very minor things: the person who takes the last biscuit, or gets the parking space you were waiting for? Or more significant things: the job you were hoping for, or the house you had your eye on?

Sometimes we might share our feelings with the person concerned, but often we just hold onto our resentment. Not much humility there!

The end of verse 2 then makes a reference to prayer, in saying, 'You do not have, because you do not ask', suggesting that we allow ourselves to become angry or resentful over those things that we don't have, rather than praying to God about them. Or perhaps we make another mistake: 'You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, in order to spend what you get on your pleasures' (v.3). When we pray, how often do we present God with a shopping list of all the things we want? Who do we most want to please – God or ourselves? When Jesus' disciples asked him how to pray, he taught them to say, 'Your will be done'.

And here we come to the theme of humility; how many conflicts and disputes might be avoided if we had the humility to say, 'Not my will, but your will be done'. This doesn't mean never expressing our desires or asserting our point of view, but if our focus is God's will, how might this reshape our priorities and our prayers?

The next section of our passage – verses 4-5 – begins with the rather blunt accusation, 'Adulterers!'. James certainly doesn't sugar-coat his message! In calling his original readers 'adulterers', James isn't talking about their personal relationships with one another, but about their relationship with God. Throughout the Old Testament, there are references to Israel being the bride of God, for example in Isaiah 54.5: 'For your Maker is your husband, the Lord of hosts is his name'. And similarly, in the New Testament, this idea is extended and applied to the Church, which is described as the Bride of Christ (e.g. 2 Corinthians 11.1-2, Revelation 21.9). So when James calls these early Christians 'adulterers', he is talking about spiritual adultery; about being unfaithful to God by putting 'worldly' things before him. By saying 'whoever wishes to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God', James isn't saying that we should hate the world that God has created; he is saying that if we allow the priorities of our culture to dictate

how we live, we will inevitably at times end up going against God's priorities. Again, this brings us back to humility: do we have the humility to recognise that God's way is best (and best for us), even if it challenges our current priorities, as well as the priorities of those around us and our wider culture?

The final section of our passage emphasises the need for humility before God (verse 6-10). In humility, we acknowledge before God our need to cleanse our hands and purify our hearts, to lament, mourn and weep over our pride and rebellion. Then we discover that God 'gives all the more grace'; like the father of the Prodigal Son, God is always waiting to meet us, to welcome us home: 'Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you' (v.8).

As the words of Mac Davis' song make clear, those who are truly humble are unlikely to be found shouting – or singing – about their humility from the rooftops. Similarly, our pursuit of humility is likely to be primarily between us and God, as we choose to pray, 'Your will be done' not 'My will be done'. In the coming week, you might ask God to show you any areas of your life where you need to grow in humility. And to encourage you in your pursuit of humility, you could write out the following words from the prophet Micah and stick them up somewhere that you will see them regularly. They say,

*And what does the Lord require of you?
To act justly and to love mercy
and to walk humbly with your God.*

Micah 6.8

Anna

Points for Prayers

- For our spiritual growth and discipleship and the need for humility as we respond to the good news of Jesus Christ
- For further services in the Group this month and particularly for Harvest services

- For Anna's ordination as priest (please see below)
- Thanksgiving for care, skill and courage of NHS workers and those in care homes
- Those suffering from coronavirus in hospitals, care homes and at home
- Need for further largescale testing and research into and development of a vaccine as soon as this can be achieved
- Preparations to avert or minimise a second wave of coronavirus
- Our Bishops
- For North Cadbury Church Primary School and Marchant Holliday school in our benefice remembering also Horsington school as they proceed with their new school year
- Prayers for those affected economically by the lockdown, for businesses and those who have become unemployed
- Prayers and thanksgiving for contributions to the foodbanks and for those helping to take these to the foodbanks.

Forthcoming services of public worship

Please see the following schedule of forthcoming services of public worship. This does not include all of the monthly services across the Group held pre-lockdown. So if a service in the Group which you regularly attended is not included in the schedule you are of course most welcome to attend any other service within the Group. However, because of the limitations on capacity in the various churches through the need for social distancing it would be appreciated if you could in these circumstances let the relevant churchwarden know in advance of your intention to do this.

Any further additions to this schedule will be notified as and when they arise.

Sunday 11th October

9.30 am, Galhampton, Communion

9.30 am, St John the Baptist North Cheriton, Communion (Anna to preside)

9.30 am, St Michael's Blackford, Matins

11.00 am, St Michael's North Cadbury, Harvest Service

11.00 am, St Nicholas Holton, Harvest Service

Sunday 18th October

9.30 am, St Mary's Compton Pauncefoot, Communion (Anna will preside)

11.00 am, St Peter and St Paul Maperton, Communion (Anna will preside)

11.00 am, St Michael's North Cadbury, Sunday Worship

6.30 pm, St Mary's Yarlinton, Evensong

Sunday 25th October (clocks go back)

8 am, St Michael's Blackford, Communion (Anna will preside)

9.30 am, St John the Baptist North Cheriton, Communion

9.30 am, St Mary's Compton Pauncefoot, Matins

11.00 am, St Michael's North Cadbury, Communion (Anna will preside)

11.00 am, St Mary's Yarlinton, Sunday Worship

11.00 am, St Thomas a Becket South Cadbury, Harvest Service

3.00 pm, St Nicholas Bratton Seymour, Harvest Service

4.00 pm, Galhampton, Evening Service

St Nicholas Bratton Seymour

A Risk Assessment for St Nicholas Bratton Seymour has now been completed and the first service to be held there following lockdown will be the Harvest Service on 25th October at 3.00 pm. This means that all the

Camelot churches will then have returned to public worship following lockdown.

Reopening churches for private prayer

North Cadbury and Galhampton churches are normally open for private prayer on Wednesday afternoons. North Cadbury is open from 2.30 pm to 4.00 pm and Galhampton from 4.00 pm to 5.00 pm followed by Celtic Worship led by Alison at 7.00 pm.

Online service to remember deaths during the pandemic

In collaboration with Wells Cathedral, the diocese has offered an online service led by Bishop Ruth and the Dean of Wells to remember all those who have died during the Covid pandemic.

The service is now available to watch

at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4cLpBxmoapQ&feature=emb_logo

Anna's ordination as priest

Congratulations to our curate Anna who was ordained as priest on Tuesday 29th September at St Cuthbert's Wells by Bishop Ruth.

Anna presided at Communion for the first time at 11.00 am on Sunday 4th October at St Michael's North Cadbury and the rota will enable Anna to preside at Communions in as many of the Camelot churches as possible in the month following her priesting.

Here is a message and photograph from Anna concerning her ordination.

A message from Anna

Thank you so much to everyone who sent me good wishes, and let me know they were thinking of me and praying for me on Tuesday evening. It may have been a small service, but it was very special and full of joy.



Here is a photo of Tristram and I taken after the service.

I very much look forward to seeing many of you around the benefice in the coming weeks as we celebrate communion together.

With love,

Anna

Growing as a worshipper, a servant and a family

*We pray that 'we might live in love,
as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us'*

(Ephesians 5:2)