

CUTTING EDGE CAMELOT, No 257

Trinity Sunday 26th May 2024

'Virtually Church but with some way to go...'

Welcome

Welcome to Cutting Edge Camelot on this Trinity Sunday.

Scripture Passages

Proverbs 8: 1-4, 22-31

Does not wisdom call,

and does not understanding raise her voice?

² On the heights, beside the way,

at the crossroads she takes her stand;

³ beside the gates in front of the town,

at the entrance of the portals she cries out:

⁴ "To you, O people, I call,

and my cry is to all that live.

²² The LORD created me at the beginning of his work,

the first of his acts of long ago.

²³ Ages ago I was set up,

at the first, before the beginning of the earth.

²⁴ When there were no depths I was brought forth,

when there were no springs abounding with water.

²⁵ Before the mountains had been shaped,

before the hills, I was brought forth -

²⁶ when he had not yet made earth and fields,

or the world's first bits of soil.

²⁷ When he established the heavens, I was there,

when he drew a circle on the face of the deep,

28 when he made firm the skies above,
when he established the fountains of the deep,
29 when he assigned to the sea its limit,
so that the waters might not transgress his command,
when he marked out the foundations of the earth,
30 then I was beside him, like a master worker;
and I was daily his delight,
rejoicing before him always,
31 rejoicing in his inhabited world
and delighting in the human race.

Romans 8: 12-17

So then, brothers and sisters, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh - ¹³ for if you live according to the flesh, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.

¹⁴ For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God. ¹⁵ For 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!" ¹⁶ it is that very Spirit bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God, ¹⁷ and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ - if, in fact, we suffer with him so that we may also be glorified with him.

Reflection

Trinity Sunday. This raises all kinds of fears and questions in the minds and hearts of those who are called to speak. Do I need to give some complicated explanation? And if I do, will I succeed only in recycling some well-known heresy?

And anyway it seems so abstract. What is the relevance of the Trinity to our everyday lives? What difference does it make?

But if we do think in this way, perhaps our two passages this morning may encourage us to think differently.

The first is from Paul's letter to the Romans. These few verses are densely packed with meaning. They focus on our relationship as Christians with God. And the understanding of this relationship has its foundations in a uniquely Christian understanding of God as Trinity. So what could be more spiritually relevant to us than to build our own personal relationship with God?

We are reminded, first of all, of the important and indeed foundational role which the Holy Spirit plays in our relationship with God. Last Sunday, we celebrated the initial outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the church on the day of Pentecost. And Trinity Sunday too in a different way draws our attention to the gift of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

As Christians our lives are guided and led 'by the Spirit of God'. And yet this relationship with the Spirit cannot be separated from our relationship with the other two Persons of the Trinity, the Father and the Son. For if we are led by the Spirit of God, we learn that we are also 'children of God.' How can this be so?

Our passage from Romans describes this relationship as a child of God in terms of adoption. So this is not a relationship which is ours by right. Rather it comes entirely through the generous gift of God.

When we receive the Holy Spirit in our lives, we receive a spirit of adoption. Modern day experiences and stories of adoption can vary. Some adoptions are very successful while others are more challenging and problematic.

However, the biblical image of adoption is intended to reflect the positive elements of the generosity of the adopting father and the freedom of the relationship which is given to the adopted children. Although not strictly an

image of adoption, we may nevertheless be reminded of the father in the parable of the Prodigal Son. The father welcomes the prodigal home with open arms despite all of the previous behaviour of the prodigal son. Because of his past behaviour, the son believes that the best he can hope for from his father is a relationship on the level of a hired hand. However, the father's generosity towards him is overwhelming. The father gives him a robe and a ring and celebrates with a feast and music.

So an adopted child of God has complete assurance and security in their relationship with God the Father. It is a relationship which gives us confidence rather than fear. We are freed from all sense of obligation or indebtedness. Rather we are able to address God, through the Holy Spirit as 'Abba! Father!' Abba was the unique way in which Jesus Himself addressed God. Some found it shocking because although it was a term of respect at the same time it conveyed an intimacy and closeness with God that was entirely new. But now Jesus invites us to share in that very same relationship of closeness with God the Father.

And as an adopted child of God we do not simply have confidence and freedom for the present, we also have a rich source of hope for the future. For if we are children then we are also 'heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ'. The prospect of our heavenly inheritance can also strengthen and sustain us in whatever trials and sufferings we are called to face in this present life.

As I think of what it means to belong to God, I am reminded of a short time where I was employed by an organisation where nothing worked out for me. I was puzzled by many of my experiences and I once explained what had happened to an older person. He listened carefully and then said to me 'It is quite simple what happened. Your face didn't fit.'

It is very painful to learn that our faces do not fit. And yet with God our face does fit. As an adopted child free from any fear of rejection, we experience a

deep and lasting sense of belonging. And this is true even if in other contexts our faces do not fit. After all, Jesus called those who were misfits in social and religious terms, tax collectors and sinners, to eat and drink with Him and be His friends and disciples.

So, as Christians, each Person of the Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, has a distinct and vital part to play in the relationship we have with God.

In the Old Testament, there is further encouragement to see the relevance and life giving nature of the Trinity. For although the Old Testament does not contain any fully fledged account of the Trinity, nevertheless in a number of places we can find powerful hints and glimpses of its workings.

One such passage is our first reading, an account of the personified figure of Wisdom from the book of Proverbs.

This begins by reminding us of the universal need and thirst which we all have for wisdom. Wisdom's cry is to 'all that live'.

And then intriguingly, we find sketched out the relationship of Wisdom to God. Wisdom was the first of God's works, existing before the creation of the world, the heavens and the earth. Wisdom in other words is eternal and was at God's side in the work of Creation. Wisdom, then, is both distinct from and yet on the same level as God.

Such a passage may remind us of the beginning of John's gospel, so familiar to us as a reading at Christmas, where we learn of the Word of God, a concept that is related to the personified figure of Wisdom, 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. (John 1: 1-3)'

And in the New Testament, Christ is identified not simply with the Word of God but also with the Wisdom of God.

As He grows up, He is filled with and increases in wisdom (Luke 2: 40, 52). And this extraordinary wisdom is often remarked upon in His ministry of teaching. People asked, 'Where did this man get all this? What is this wisdom that has been given to him?' (Mark 6:2).

Following His death and resurrection, Christ becomes openly identified with Wisdom, being spoken of as 'the wisdom of God' (1 Corinthians 1:24) and as the One 'in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge' (Colossians 2: 2-3).

We all need wisdom in the many challenging tasks and decisions that will inevitably come our way in life. But we need to be on our guard against another form of wisdom, one which rather than considering either God or other people is focused on our own self-preservation and advantage. Of this wisdom, the New Testament says, 'I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart' (1 Corinthians 1:19) and that 'the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God' (1 Corinthians 3:19).

So, there is an opposition between the wisdom that we find in Christ and the wisdom of the world. So often the world's wisdom consists in clever plans which at some level or another involve deception. On the other, God's wisdom may find us doing the right thing but not being acknowledged or applauded for it.

Perhaps then we come back to the question of where our face fits. Where do we find that we are comfortable and where does our face fit? There is a decision to be made here. For we may find that as we experience true belonging and freedom as a child of God, as we find our face fits with God, so also it does not fit with other people, guided by worldly rather than

Christ's wisdom. And which verdict, that of God or other people, matters most to us?

Tristram

Points for Prayers

- The deep sense of belonging to God through accepting our adoption as a child of God
- The General Election
- For continuing and new conflicts including those in the Ukraine, Israel, Gaza and Iran
- Those whom we know who are facing illnesses of all kinds and have recently been bereaved
- For Elliscombe House in Higher Holton and its residents
- For teachers and children of North Cadbury church school now on a mid term break

Hymn

One well known hymn set for Trinity Sunday is 'Holy, holy, holy, Lord God almighty.'

Services for this week and next

Sunday 26 th May	8.00 am Communion, Blackford
Sunday 26 th May	9.30 am Communion, South Cadbury
Sunday 26 th May	9.30 am Matins, Compton Pauncefoot
Sunday 26 th May	9.30 am Morning Worship, North Cheriton
Sunday 26 th May	11.00 am Communion, North Cadbury

Sunday 26 th May	11.00 am Sunday Worship, Yarlington
Sunday 26 th May	6.30 pm Evening Service, Galhampton
Sunday 2 nd June	9 am Communion, Yarlington
Sunday 2 nd June	9.30 am Camelot Matins, North Cheriton
Sunday 2 nd June	11.00 am Group Communion, North Cadbury

Excalibur online

The May edition of Excalibur has now been published online at camelotparishes.co.uk. It contains details of Camelot people, a record of baptisms, weddings and funerals undertaken through the church in the Camelot Parishes.

The Parish Office

If Rob is not in the Office during normal office hours please contact him via email (office@camelotparishes.org.uk) or on 01749 850934.

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)