

Bulletin for Sunday

24th May 2020

Dear Friends

Good Morning to you all! I said in my last letter that we might return to the story of the Ascension - Jesus starting to work from home. With many people working from home recently, we have seen - on TV or online - glimpses into the places that others live, the clothes they wear there (much more casual!) and the pets, and other people, that share their home lives. Jesus' home for much of his life was apparently in Nazareth; then for several years he travelled around from place to place; but in truth, as we shall sing later: 'heaven was his home'.

Hymn: O worship the King, all-glorious above (Rejoice & Sing 47)

Prayer: God of glory - our maker, our defender, our redeemer, and our friend,
we bring to you our praise and adoration;
we come before you with our grateful thanks;
and we hand over to you our burdens, at least for a while....
Come close to us as we worship,
that we may hear your words and be comforted by your presence.
Amen

followed by The Lord's Prayer

Reading: Acts 1: 6-14

Reflection: At school, I was taught that the secret to sending the ball where you wanted it to go (in tennis or hockey) was to be looking at its intended destination. To follow the ball with your eyes to where you wanted it to go.

The disciples did that with Jesus - they gazed at him as he was lifted upwards, even after they couldn't see him any more. Why?

Was it because they didn't want him to go; because they were struggling to understand what would happen next, or what they were supposed to do? Surely we could sympathise - doesn't that resonate with our situation: waiting, living day by day without being able to see the future or what it might be like?

Or, on the other hand, did they gaze upwards because actually they were starting to understand? 'Looking upwards' is commonly a metaphor for focusing on God, which they were trying very hard to do.

To say that somebody is 'so heavenly minded that they're no earthly good' implies that too much gazing upwards prevents you from living fully and usefully in the here and now. But I disagree. Looking upwards - focussing on God - should help us to tune in to God's priorities, which are very much about earthly good.

Jesus lived, briefly, in a small and specific place and time, and taught about God's priorities. His Ascension allowed his presence, through the Holy Spirit, to be with us in all places and at all times. Heaven was his home, the hymn says. True. But earth is, too.

Hymn: My song is love unknown (R&S 207)

Prayer: God whose home is heaven, as we look up at the skies you made,
we pray for our friends; our neighbours; our community; our world;
all who share this same, wide sky.....
We pray for those who are ill in body or in mind; for the bereaved;
for those who struggle with life now, or who worry about the future.....
Where there is pain, bring healing,
and where there is conflict and fear, bring peace.
In the name of Jesus, we ask it, Amen.

Hymn: From heaven you came, helpless babe (R&S 522)

May we follow him into this week
and all the weeks ahead;
and may the blessing of God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
be with us and with all those we love
this week and every week. Amen

Please remember in your prayers Sarah who has been ill in hospital this last week, and all others known to us and to God who are unwell. We think also of Karen and Jeanette. May God bless with peace all those struggling with life at the moment.

Please let me know of any other news or prayer requests.
Every blessing for the week ahead.

Anne Lewitt