

Lent 4

Sometimes our life in the church, the life of the bible and the life that is God, can seem a little distant to the ordinary life that is us. Where is God as we budget for our living costs, or celebrate when our team's won? Where is God when we're watching Tipping Point or The Chase or when we're pushing the trolley around the supermarket? Other times such separation is less so and we see where the threads of connection meet up between our life of faith and our life of whatever it might be; work, retirement, home life, social life? For many people of course, there is only one life, and that's the here and now and any other life is open to argument.

Sometimes we might like the life we enter into when we read a book and it's so good we don't want to put it down. I remember those first lots of headphones when I was younger and I could enter into the world of whatever music I was playing, whilst normal family life was going on around me. Mind you, I couldn't do it too much in the social set up of mum and dad and two sisters. Everything is so accessible now, but I remember, it must have been without any headphones, getting the LP I wanted on Christmas Day and I was dying to play it, but opportunity and timing wasn't there. Still, looking at the album cover and thinking of what was inside was something. Talking of inside, there is an inside to all of us, which sometimes surfaces on the outside. However it is manifested, we might feel it is something that is at a distance from our life with God and it doesn't have to be anything outrageous! Ultimately though, the connection between all of our life and the life that is God, cannot be separated for the person of faith. God loves us and he gave us his Son, so that the Son might give us the whole of his life, ending in sacrifice as the Son of Man is lifted up on the cross, so that we might come to know what real life is. A life that does not perish but is eternal. A life where sin has been taken away. Death might be the end of the physical body as we know it, but resurrection is the beginning of new life where the new body is untouched by corruption and evil deeds, which we all have the potential to commit. Deeds which don't take too kindly to being exposed to the light that is Christ, through whom no blemish is hidden. In Jesus, no book is closed, no LP is left in it's cover, for Jesus can read the story and listen to the music of our lives. Jesus doesn't want to condemn us for all our wrongs and yes I'm sure we all have lots of rights as well, but no wherever we fall below par Jesus offers us the more perfect life. He reaches out his hand to us and says, 'come and be saved, I want you to have eternal life.'

So do we want to come to the light? Perhaps we think we're already there? If we are, well that's good. Perhaps then we can show others where the light is. And let's not forget the rest of our journey. No doubt more light needs to shine in the darkness that is still in us. We're not out of the dark yet but we're getting there. Maybe we need to know Jesus a bit more. Put our trust in him and not flinch when he exposes our deeds a bit too much. Because the more we get to dwell in the light, we just might realize that the light Jesus brings into the world is a kindly light, that seeks to heal and not put to shame.

In our Lent Group where we're looking at depictions of Jesus life in art, paintings frescoes, mosaics, we looked on Thursday at the healing of the paralytic man who was lowered down through the ceiling by his friends, so they could get him to Jesus. Jesus as we hear in the reflection is upright, strong and muscular and the man being lowered down on the swaying bed, is half naked, small and weak with hands reaching out to Jesus. The last verse of the reflection goes as such. And it helps if you actually look at a copy of the mosaic.

'Our minds eye links the two figures,
large and small,
until the Word and man conjoin
and wholeness is attained
not only in that place
but in the living depths of our own mysterious souls.'

As we continue through Lent and get nearer to the passion of Christ as 'the Son of Man is lifted up', may we come to the foot of the cross, gaze at our Saviour and seek to become one with him, where darkness is no more and our deeds are done in God.
Amen