**Sermon for Trinity 18 on Sunday 3rd October 2021**

Hebrews 1.1-4, 2.5-12

Mark 10.2-16

What an amazing letter the letter to the Hebrews is. It is full of beautiful gems and wonderful declarations. Nuggets of truth, stating the reality of Jesus Christ and what God has done through him.

Take verse three for example: Jesus Christ is the reflection of God’s glory and the exact imprint of God’s very being. We see God in Jesus Christ - his humility, his authority, his love, his power, his compassion for the poor, his thirst for justice and righteousness, his acceptance of all especially the downtrodden and outcast is a reflection of God himself. God’s heart, God’s love, revealed in the words and actions of Jesus Christ.

This is so reassuring. For now we know what God is like. Not a harsh judgmental overbearing demanding God but one who laid aside his awesome authority, power and status as the creator, humbled himself, and became a human being.

And now Jesus Christ is back in the heavenly realms, seated at the right hand of the Majesty on high and has regained the authority and status that he had laid aside, yet even more so because of what he endured and suffered. He is held in even greater honour now because of what he willingly went through in his passion, death and resurrection. What a triumph, what a victory that was.

It is no wonder that Revelations 5 records thousands of thousands of angels and living creatures including the elderssinging with full voice,

‘Worthy is the Lamb that was slaughtered

to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might

and honour and glory and blessing!’

We are likewise called to praise Jesus, sing alleluia to him, give him the honour and worship that is due to him.

The writer to the Hebrews is so overwhelmed by the glory of God that he asks why should God be interested in us, mindful of us? Look at verse 6 with me. “But someone has testified somewhere, ‘What are human beings that you are mindful of them, or mortals, that you care for them?”

Jesus Christ is far greater and more wonderful than us and so are angels - beautiful magnificent creatures. Why should almighty God look at us, even think about us?  Yet God is mindful of us. This awesome truth is quoted from psalm 8.

When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers,

The moon and the stars, that you have established;

What are human beings that you are mindful of them,

Mortals that you care for them?

Yet you have made them a little lower than God,

and crowned them with glory and honour.

You have given them dominion over the works of your hands;

You have put all things under their feet, all sheep and oxen,

and also the beasts of the field, the birds of the air,

and the fish of the sea, whatever passes along the paths of the seas.

God has crowned us with glory and honour and has subjected all things under our feet. What an amazing fact, what an awesome responsibility. Look at those words in verse 8: “ subjecting all things under their feet.” Our feet, humanity’s feet.

Do we live up to it? …There is nothing outside of our control.

So people how are we doing? …Not particularly well.

Climate change is a huge problem of our own doing. When I say our, this is a collective human our, all of us across the world are in this. There are many areas of conflict, of violence forcing people to leave their homes. Others have left in the search for sustainable jobs or been forced out because of climate change. We have learnt of these in the past 4 weeks.

Corruption, cheating, bribery, is endemic in some places and in our own country we see knife crime, drug running, child abuse. So many failures of our God given place in this world. And the writer to the Hebrews experienced the same.

Chapter 2 Verse 8, “As it is, we do not yet see everything in subjection to them (human beings)” but the next part of this sentence in verse 9 is key “but we do see Jesus.” “we do not yet see everything in subjection to them, to us, but we do see Jesus.”

We see Jesus in those who are fighting for justice and righteousness. We see Jesus in those who are persevering for changes in government policies and individual and corporate actions to prevent further climate change. We see Jesus in those who are reaching out to refugees and asylum seekers, especially those lifeboat men and women who put their own lives on the line. We see Jesus in those who at risk to themselves are hiding others from the Taliban. We see Jesus in the face of the nurses and doctors, the carers who have persevered throughout COVID-19, despite their fear. We see Jesus in those who have worked so hard to provide and deliver vaccines. We see Jesus in the post men and women, the dustbin men, the shopkeepers, the lorry drivers, the factory workers who have faithfully kept our society working day after day. We see Jesus in the eyes of undertakers, funeral directors and funeral pyre men working overtime to meet increased demands for their services especially in places like India. We see Jesus in the food banks, the home delivery volunteers, the people who go the extra mile to help another person in need. We see Jesus in each other every time we smile, offer a word of encouragement, give a listening ear. We see Jesus in Archbishop Justin as he sits by the hospital bed of a Muslim lady dying from COVID, experiencing the love of God surrounding them, promising eternal life.

There is so much wrong with the world. But we do see Jesus. For these simple acts reveal God’s glory, show up the imprint of God’s being in humanity, in ourselves. Jesus Christ revealed through us.

So today, choose to be a reflection of God’s glory, choose to allow the imprint of God to shine through you. Be gentle with someone, show compassion and generosity to another, reach out with love and a listening ear to a third, stand against injustice, pray for righteousness to be present, for evil to flee away, pray that lives will be transformed by the glory of God. See Jesus in all that you are and do. Amen

The Revd Graham D Phillips