**Last Sunday of Trinity – Bible Sunday**

**2020**

**Colossians 3 verses 12 – 17**

Today we have two options to choose from for our readings as we come to the end of the long Trinity Season, the readings for ‘last after Trinity’ as it is called or for ‘Bible Sunday.’ This year I have opted for the Bible Sunday readings as I want to draw on the reading from Colossians, but first a few thoughts about the ending and beginnings of seasons, things that as I have said before act as markers in our lives.

The church year is divided into its’ own seasons, each with its own allotted colour which helps us to easily see what type of ‘time’ we are in. We have been in ‘green’ for a very long time, for 20 Sundays in fact, and I always like to think of this season as a time of ‘green for growing’ rather than a time that just stretches out endlessly over the summer and autumn weeks.

For that let’s turn our thoughts to our New Testament reading which comes from Paul’s letter to the little church in Colosse, in Asia Minor, part of what we know as Turkey today. Paul was writing to correct some of their heretical thinking and the reading before us today is a guide for Holy living as Paul sets out how the Colossians of the first century and we in the 21st century should be seeking to live out our faith today.

Paul writes, ‘*As God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, meekness and patience’.* These are all attributes of course that reflect the character of Christ, the way that Jesus himself would always respond. I have often referred to us all being on a journey, a faith journey that never ends and should always be enabling us to grow and to be transformed into a greater likeness of Christ and here we have four characteristics that we can actively seek to develop as we open ourselves to allow God to be at work in us. Compassion, kindness, meekness and patience, which I wonder do you feel you would like to have more of in your life?

Compassion for others was one of the key drivers in Christ’s teaching, in the way he acted and reacted and in some of the stories he told, remember it was the Samaritan who had compassion for the injured man on the Jericho Road that day – the question I suggest we need to ask ourselves is how strong are our feelings of compassion for situations we see today and what if anything are we prepared to do in response.

Kindness is next on Paul’s list. Kindness is something that I have seen and experienced a lot of in Crockham Hill since we were first affected by the covid pandemic back in March. Many people have been responsible for all sort of acts of kindness over the last six months, some seen and some unseen, so I hope growing in kindness is something that we can all identify with and I’ll come back to kindness later.

Meekness, a word we tend to associate with the Sermon on the Mount and what we know as the Beatitudes, *Blessed are the meek for they will inherit the earth.* Here we are being encouraged to think about our attitude towards God, rather than simply to one another, and we could substitute the word humility for meekness. Perhaps a question for us today is, are we prepared to come to God in an attitude of humility and humble ourselves before him, and perhaps even more important are we willing to allow ourselves to increase in this attribute and allow it to grow in our lives, are we willing to take seriously the words written by the prophet Micah over 700 years before Jesus was born as he records what God wants from his people. That they should *do justice, and to love kindness and to walk humbly with your God?* A challenge then and a challenge for us today.

And finally patience, one of the Fruits of the Spirit in Paul’s letter to the Galatians. Growing in patience is a sign of allowing the Holy Spirit to be at work in our lives, along of course with the other fruits of *love, joy, peace, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.* So I wonder how you would score on patience today, I’m certainly a could do, and needs to do better on this!

So as we come to the end of Trinity season and mark Bible Sunday, let’s take to heart the words of Paul and seek to ‘clothe’ ourselves with these four attributes of Christ, compassion, kindness, humility and meekness in an ever growing and deepening way.

This week in Collective Worship in Crockham Hill School the children have been thinking about how they can spread kindness and build an even kinder community. I left them with these words on Thursday morning ‘Kindness is just love with its work boots on,’ and as I close I want to ask; are your love boots polished and ready to go?

Rev Sue Diggory

22nd October 2020