

07 February 2021 Second Sunday before Lent

Reading Proverbs 8.1,22-31 FACEBOOK and POSTED SERVICE

¹Does not wisdom call,
and does not understanding raise her voice?
²²The LORD created me at the beginning of his work,
the first of his acts of long ago.
²³Ages ago I was set up,
at the first, before the beginning of the earth.
²⁴When there were no depths I was brought forth,
when there were no springs abounding with water.
²⁵Before the mountains had been shaped,
before the hills, I was brought forth –
²⁶when he had not yet made earth and fields,
or the world's first bits of soil.
²⁷When he established the heavens, I was there,
when he drew a circle on the face of the deep,
²⁸when he made firm the skies above,
when he established the fountains of the deep,
²⁹when 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,
³⁰then I was beside him, like a master worker;
and I was daily his delight, rejoicing before him always,
³¹rejoicing in his inhabited world
and delighting in the human race.

Reflection

Wisdom is seen in the scriptures as God, and specifically often seen as the feminine form of God. Like the Spirit, Wisdom is seen as universal, and able to move over all of creation. But in this passage, we also note the Wisdom is seen as in close contact with the Creator, "I was daily his delight" is a fabulous phrase that sounds like a very intimate relationship. And the relationship is not passive, for Wisdom is "like a master worker". This is what we are invited to become, as through baptism the Holy Spirit comes to dwell within us, so we can become like Wisdom/Spirit co-workers with God, sharing intimately in God's delight in all of creation.

Reading Colossians 1.15-20 EMAILED AND ZOOM EUCHARIST

¹⁵Christ is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; ¹⁶for in him all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or powers – all things have been created through him and for him. ¹⁷He himself is before all things, and in him all things hold together. ¹⁸He is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that he might come to have first place in everything. ¹⁹For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, ²⁰and through him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross.

Gospel John 1.1-14 EMAILED AND ZOOM EUCHARIST

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning.

Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it.

There came a man who was sent from God; his name was John. He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all men might believe. He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light.

The true light that gives light to every man was coming into the world.

He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognise him. He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God – children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.

The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

Reflection

It is part of being human to ask where we are from, how did we get here. The genealogies of Jesus in the bible show that our interest in our ancestors is nothing new. While it may be a matter of public record to trace our great great great grandparents and beyond, we still have the unanswered question of how did the world begin? How did everything start? In this wonderful reading from John's gospel we are reminded that we are held in the creative power of our loving God the Father, and His Son Jesus and the Holy Spirit too. Here is the plan for the world, created at the very beginning. Here we understand about

the limitations of linear time, and the challenges of communication between the awesome divine, and human beings with their limited understanding.

Colossians says that “Christ is the visible image of the invisible God” Getting our head around that is a challenge, especially when the vulnerability of the babe of Bethlehem is revealed as Lord of Life and Love, the Messiah, our King. For some this is too much to think about, for others it is impossible to believe.

But for those who can, do say with hand on heart that “Lord, in the midst of my doubt and confusion about where I come from, how and why the world was created, I believe in God, and God’s loving care for me.” However, we cannot stop there – we need also to ask for the courage to question, the strength to choose to learn more of God, and the openness to recognise the invisible God in not only the life death and resurrection of Christ, but in his followers too, in you and in me. For in us God has made his home. In us burns the Light of Christ. Through us God’s love is shown, or not. Through us hope can be born, or destroyed. With Christ as our head, in whom the fullness of God dwells, we can step forward in faith and hope knowing that our past – recent or ancient has always been held by God, and that our future is securely held in his love also.

**Prayers by Rev. Ian McLean
and posted on the Church of Scotland’s *Starters for Sunday* website.**

Heavenly Father, we are not altogether convinced that darkness is a thing of the past. Many people in this world of ours feel their world is one of darkness and gloom. Pressures crowd in upon us and get us down.

The causes are varied: bereavement, illness, money, worries about family, trouble at work or not having work, drugs, drink, boredom, doubt, weariness, futility.

Then there are the world issues: war, poverty, climate change, disease, unfair trade and so on. It does not help when we feel that as Christians we should be doing so much better than we are. Gracious and loving God, we rejoice that you are with us in our troubles, you know us and you love us – always.

Even though we have made a mess of things personally and collectively you remain faithful. We rejoice that your Son came not to a perfect world, but to a broken world, our world. To bring light to the darkness, our darkness.

We pray for our dark and dreary world, a world in need – in need not just of a technical fix, but in need of love and grace, forgiveness and new life, hope, peace and fellowship, in need of renewal, in need of YOU.

We pray that you would come alongside us and all those for whom we pray, that you would show us Jesus, the light of the world, the one who came (and who comes) to rid us of sin, to give us life and health and peace, peace that passes all understanding – not a temporary respite from trouble but the strength to overcome it and ultimately to receive life eternal.

You don't wave a magic wand for everything to be sorted instantly – you require us to exercise our faith and to respond to your call to preach the gospel and to seek to live it out, to look to you for the strength that we need to share your love and grace. Help us to share the good news in word and action – the same good news that the fishermen were called to proclaim that there is a Saviour, a merciful king who loves us and whom we can love and adore.

We have been set free. Enable us to use our freedom to share in bringing in the kingdom. In the light of this we have something to celebrate, something to shout about – for even in our trouble and pain, even in our loss, we know that Jesus is with us.

Hear us as in a moment of silence we pray for those in darkness (of whatever kind) – let us pray that they may see and know the light of Christ: *Silence*

The Lord is my light and my salvation. Hear our prayers, Lord, spoken and unspoken and answer them for Jesus' sake. **Amen**

~ written by Rev. Ian McLean, and posted on the Church of Scotland's Starters for Sunday website.
http://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0005/18473/12_January_2014.pdf

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