

May I speak in the name of God who is Father, Son and Holy Spirit

Creationtide may be a new season for many of us. It is for me. I find it a wonderful opportunity to reflect on all that we have been given and what we have done with those gifts. This Sunday has the title Humanity Sunday. That opened the doors quite a bit for me to think about this talk. However, the readings today have allowed me to focus the love that God has for us from creation and through his Son Jesus Christ.

God created us in his image and likeness. He offers us everything, gives us everything. He tells us populate creation and care for it. Gave us responsibility to it. To quote Spiderman's uncle "With great power comes great responsibility."

"With great power comes great responsibility" How do you think we have done? What have we done with dominion God has given us.

I wonder if you have thought about what that word dominion. The term dominion means to rule over nature. The Christian premise that humans are in charge of the world on behalf of God. On behalf of God. Yet many of the rich and powerful, many governments take a literal interpretation of this word believing that this gives humankind the right to use the world's natural resources for their own benefit. That is a skewed view and I feel we have lost the idea of balance. God loves us so much, gives us so much, why are we not content to hold the treasures of creation in balance.

Tonight, one of our national treasures, David Attenborough, will speak on television about extinction. The show will be harrowing to many and may spur some of the human race to action. I wonder how you might feel to see creation, given to us to care for, so violently torn apart as the human race seeks to gain empty power and wealth. It is upsetting and frustrating costs so much to so many who have very little in the first place. Are we able to accept our part in this. How do we make a difference? How do encourage change.

In my mid-thirties I wanted my furniture to be made of tropical wood, inside and outside. It was the fashion and I wanted more things. Much of it has been disposed of one way or another, wasted. As I reflect, on those times I wonder why. That is my fault. I am to blame.

As the human race continues to look inward, we can blame previous generations, be inactive in our own and wait for the next generation to make it right, but history shows this is not what happens. Making it someone else's problem does not mean that it will be repaired or stopped or rectified. It comes down to people acting as servants to creation, to one another, standing up for the right things. Making a difference.

Today Jesus speaks to the disciples about responsibility, what it means to serve one another, and I believe creation too. The verses arrive following James and John trying to steal a march on the other disciples as they ask for positions of honour on

his left and his right. (Good Friday image) The other disciples take unkindly to this and argue about who should and who shouldn't. I wonder how often we feel sorrow for Jesus. Of course, it is there in his Passion. But how must he feel as this group of people who he hold so close argue with one and other overly earthly things.

Still we disagree in the Church over so many things. Often things that will be of little importance to God. If this causes us to take our focus away from Jesus and his teaching how will that further the Kingdom of God. Jesus is trying to get the disciples to understand that he will not be with them much longer, and that the mission of the Gospel will be theirs and it will be uncomfortable. He tells them not to act as the "Gentiles" do, here I understand that also to mean those who do not look or listen for God. But to act in the way of a servant and to make a difference.

An example of one disciples service is Peter. Peter often caught a glimpse of the wonder of God yet within minutes, perhaps seconds, turned his eyes away and got it wrong. More than once. Being a servant means carrying a burden, Jesus bore his, the cross, and extols us to do the same thing. Being a servant, a disciple, taking up our cross means walking life's toughest road. Keeping our focus on Jesus.

So why does Jesus continue to speak to the disciples of servanthood in this way? He wanted (he still wants) disciples who were willing to face the difficulties inherent in furthering the Kingdom of God. To proclaim the Gospel (the good news). To serve one another, as the world inevitably continues to go its own self-serving way. To be called to face the world, moving against the flood of Godlessness, materialism and selfishness. That work can weaken us to the point where we once again take our focus away from Jesus.

The 20<sup>th</sup> century theologian, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, speaks of the cross, of servanthood, in this way. When Christ calls us, he bids us come and die. Not death in the sense of our life on earth ending, but in following Jesus, laying down something and beginning something new. It is in the essence of the wheat seed that Jesus speaks of in John 12:24. **Jesus says** *"Very truly I tell you, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds."*

Bonhoeffer offers the comfort that each of us hears the call of Jesus. That our cross, our service, is never more than we can bear. It is just that we don't always recognise it. Our calling is special and individual. Jeremiah 29.11 for "I know the plans I have for you." Declares the Lord.

I wonder do we listen closely enough, long enough, to hear God's call upon our hearts and lives. Have we, as disciples, become lost. Are we now content to rely on the promise of eternal life, to be like James and John and to want something we have not yet earned. Do we, as people of faith, feel disenfranchised in society and therefore believe we cannot make a difference. Martin Luther King spoke of dreaming.

“I have a dream that one day every valley shall be exalted, every hill and mountain shall be made low, the rough places will be made plain, and the crooked places will be made straight, and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together.”

We have examples of people, young and old, historical and modern who have continued to work for God’s Glory. We are created equal in the eye of God, made in his image. God sent us Jesus Christ to free us from our sin, to be the perfect servant to all and to bring humankind back to God.

Our calling, our cross, our service is to bring the people closer to God. In doing so we may recognise our own faults and mistakes and rectify them. A recognition that may help to change the course of social injustice or bring succour and love to those who do not know what that means. To do this we must continue to keep our focus on Jesus, hold a steady course. To give where we can, to help where we can, to protest where we can and to pray without ceasing.

Martin Luther King had a dream. Do you still dare to dream. Can you take up your cross, serve Christ, serve one another and the whole of creation. Amen.