

Church Family Newsletter 7th May 2020

WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?

Thought for today from Reader Roy Goodship...

During the lock down I have been trying to take a walk every day if I can. Of course, we must all keep to the social distancing rules. When I was out for my walk the other day when the sun was shining and the birds were singing, I was nearly caught out. I came to the end of the road and I turned the corner and nearly bumped into a man coming the other way. We jumped apart to avoid instant contamination.

I got into a friendly chat with this man and he was very concerned about the pandemic situation. He kept saying 'I don't know what's going on' and 'I can't work it out'. It made me think that most people these days seem to make the automatic assumption that everything is within our grasp and we should be able to arrive at a definite explanation for all that happens.

I am reminded of my Old Testament hero Job. After all his agony and heart searching finally God speaks in chapters 38 and 39. Here we find a magnificent and lofty speech which demonstrates man's inability to probe the mystery of the universe. It begins 'where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell me, if you have understanding'. Job 38.4. It goes on 'have you commanded the morning since your days began, and caused the dawn to know its place...' Job 38.12.

Of course, we try to establish the truth by rational enquiry but this can only take us so far. It could be too much of an effort. In Ecclesiastes 12.12 we read 'Of making many books there is no end, and much study is a weariness of the flesh'. (a favourite verse for students I think!) God has given us the intellect to be used to discover useful knowledge and many experts help us in this but what we need is the wisdom from God. We cannot work it all out by our own efforts; it has to be revealed to us.

This is fundamental to the Christian faith which is based on the revealed truth of the Bible and God having revealed himself in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. We can't rely on ourselves to work it out – we have to defer to a higher authority.

We remember the psalmist. He cannot understand why the wicked prosper and why the righteous have to suffer. The turning point comes here - Psalm 73.16 says 'But when I thought how to understand this, it seemed to me a wearisome task, until I went into the sanctuary of God'. Similarly, the prophet Jeremiah is bewailing his lot. Lamentations 3.14,15 says 'I have become the laughingstock of all peoples, the burden of their songs all day long. He has filled me with bitterness, he has sated me with wormwood'. He has endured opposition for his stand for the Lord and he is distressed. The turning point for Jeremiah comes here - Lamentations 3.21 'But this I call to mind, and therefore I have hope: the steadfast love of the Lord never ceases, his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is thy faithfulness'.

If we are unsure or troubled or downcast, we must come into the sanctuary of God with our prayers and we must call to mind His word. Jesus said 'If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free' John 8.31,32