

Jeremiah complains ~ he feels deceived and he blames God for that deception ~ when really he has not understood where God has placed him and the importance of his reliance on God to work through him. When it dawns on Jeremiah that God has it in hand he remembers to give Him praise and thanks!

Paul writes about being dead to sin and alive in Christ ~ ensuring that we try to avoid sin and keep our focus on our Lord with the help of the Holy Spirit ~ so that our own self does not get in the way of our living with Christ ~ and we need to remain alert because it doesn't matter how long you or I have been Christian our old self will still get in the way if we let it!

And our Gospel? Matthew records Jesus' teaching that there will not be peace on earth ~ we will still argue and disagree within families and nations and sometimes that will be over Jesus himself ~ but in accepting Him as Lord we have to put Him first ~ love Him more than any human relative and follow His teaching which will take us out of our comfort zones but will bring us peace and an understanding so that God's purpose becomes clear. We need to learn to trust that God will care for us and expect that to happen!

I can only apologise to the members of the meeting last week that for a split second I let my old self grasp at an opportunity to ignore the work of the Spirit. Now I can praise God that it gives rise to me sharing this morning something of the vulnerability of being faithful ~ even as your priest holding that special responsibility and authority. I can get it wrong just as easily as any of you listening BUT if we can get it wrong ~ it follows that with the power of the Holy Spirit working within us we can get it right ~and after all is said and done today we prayed for that Holy Spirit to allow us to "know Jesus and make Him known." Amen.

Ministry Musings (25th June 2017)

God works in mysterious ways but he always works for our good and to show us His unconditional love. Some of the Old Testament is hard to understand in this light and especially when we hear chunks of text out of context from the whole accounts! Today we need to know that in response to the evil they were suffering under the rule of Nebuchadnezzar God had told Jeremiah and other prophets that Judah should submit to Is destructive rule as although this would be humbling to Judah it would be preferable to resisting him and therefore continuing to disobey God!

To show their submission God commanded Jeramiah to make wooden Yokes for himself and various kings to wear. Inevitably there were many who were not ready to repent and return to God and thus we have the account of Hananiah, the false prophet. Breaking the yoke of Babylon symbolises and Jeremiah's sarcastic response to Hananiah neatly calls his bluff and challenges him! God's way historically is not to give prophecies of calm and peace but those of chaos and Destruction unless the people return to Him. Hananiah misses the sarcasm and the reality of God's pattern of working sadly leading to the nations continuing to go their own way for many more years. Christ of course turns this upside down ~ "For my yoke is easy and my burden is light". (Matthew 11:30)

Those words come at the end of a series the teachings that reveal the differences between Gods love and the worlds self-centredness and how we should all strive to live by and share God's love. We can only follow Jesus' example if we are not tied by the world but by God's Word and the Holy Spirit. Paul tries to explain this in his letter to the Romans.

How can you live by and share God's love day to day in family life, your place in the community and beyond?

**Knowing Jesus ~
making Him known**



Jeremiah 20: 7-13 OT page 733

Romans 6:1b-11 NT page 152

Matthew 10:24-39 NT page 10

You know it is not always easy to recognise that God is granting us what we pray for! Take this morning's Collect the one you nearly didn't get printed! Take a minute to reflect on what we all prayed for ~

Lord, you have taught us
that all our doings without love are nothing worth:
send your Holy Spirit
and pour into our hearts that most excellent gift of love,
the true bond of peace and of all virtues,
without which whoever lives is counted dead before you.
Grant this for your only Son Jesus Christ's sake,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. Amen.

So what did we do?

- I. We acknowledged that without love in what we do our actions are empty ~ Love or God has to be present for them to be of true value and to bring Him glory.
- II. Then we asked that God would send the Holy Spirit so that we will have that gift of Love in our hearts in all our doings ~ why ? Because love enables our actions to be taken in the bond of peace and done for all the right reasons!
- III. And we admitted that if we don't act in the bond of peace then our actions are hollow and selfish and will not reflect God at work ~ we will be counted as dead ~our actions will have no value.

That is fairly heavy stuff ~ when we believe that God hears our prayers and answers them! But you and I get so preoccupied in our own space and activity that, without

even realising it, we don't notice that we are ignoring the Spirit is trying to work through us and others!

Let me give you an example from my own week. There was a meeting that I did not have noted down, but had I of known I could have attended, the minutes came out and a decision made was noted as "Action tell Elizabeth" BUT I got the minutes first! The item turns arrangements already made completely on their head by rearranging the date and nature of what it is now planned will happen.

Now, I trust the group that met and know that their reasoning will be completely sound and covered in prayer ~ so the new arrangements will stand and, in fact, will ease my workload.

You would have thought then that I would have thanked the group and left it at that ~ but no ~ self got in the way ~ I got in the way! I read the minutes and forgot to consider the Spirit at work ~ instead I became defensive and slightly threatened by what superficially looked like being undermined ~ and told them so! That was never their intention!

Now I know as well as everyone else at Immanuel that we are not always the best at communicating ~ even when we think we have got it right!

What the group could not have possibly known was how hard establishing the original arrangements had been or that the new arrangements mean reorganising the start of my holiday and dog care and that instead of travelling with friends at the end of their visit up here I will now have to travel by train! All that is now sorted! But in the meantime I have caused a storm in a tea cup!

If we can pray and then ignore that our prayers will be answered what are we capable of doing with our scripture which we consider to be the Word of God and our guide to His outrageous and unconditional love?