

Jeremiah 28: 5-9 OT page 742, Romans 6:12-23 NT page 152,
Matthew 10:40-42 NT page 10

This morning I am going to repeat a question that I ask you in last week's sermon ~ and I have commented on in this week's musings ~ it is this

"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?"

We are going to do some work together on this ~

First ~ sit and think about just how outrageous and unconditional God's love is ~ how outrageous has it been for you this week and for your family and friends. The experience might have been really small and almost insignificant if it hadn't reminded you of God's presence! Tell your neighbour!

Second ~ Whatever you have thought of ~ can you think of a scripture that tells you to expect that unconditional love ~ or affirms or confirms the experience that you have had?

Third ~ we are going to hold what we have shared before God and pray

Lord, We are not going to worry or feel inadequate about what we have shared ~ but thank you that you have revealed to us through your Spirit just how easy it is to recognise or to ignore you in our everyday activities. We pray that you will help us to tune in to your presence with us more naturally and find you in everyone and everything. Amen.

Now, last week we heard that Jeremiah the prophet found himself unable to recognise God's presence in his life ~ (and he was a prayerful and practiced prophet) ~ so if he could miss God then how good is it that we are even blessed with a small glimpse? This week, having rediscovered how to see God's presence in everything again he finds himself confronting Hananiah. Hananiah is a false prophet ~ he is speaking what the people want to hear and not in away that the Lord usually addresses issues with the people. Jeremiah needs to reveal this false teaching to the people.... to point out that their scripture

or spoken tradition does not affirm or confirm what they are experiencing ~ the Lord has always used His prophets to tell of disasters that will prevent peace if the people continue to go their own way ~ but they are listening to the prophets telling them of peace without them turning back to God ~ restoration without Responsibility or repentance! Jeremiah invites the people to test the validity of the prophets by whether these prophecies come true or not! How do you test what is of God and what is not? Paul writes

"Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires."

Do you see God at work in the aftermath of the London atrocities and the Grenfell House fire or are all you see the disasters and not what follows? The sinful world cannot see beyond the hurt and pain, the faithful community responds to that hurt and pain by being there, in words and in action. Those experiences are part of our everyday life ~ how we respond indicates the depth of our faithfulness and as a means of challenging us to deepen that relationship further. We are praying as a community and as Individuals. Some of you have been actively involved in collecting or sorting all the aid that has been donated: the surplus of which will be sold to raise funds to continue to help. Some of you will buy from the charity shops being the outlets for those sales. God asks each of us to respond differently ~ but respond we must. Some will contribute to the foodbank ~ oh yes, we have changed our collection bin to encourage you not to throw your rubbish in it!

What is your response ~ do you stay with the Jeremiah who only sees the material bad around him or the refreshed man who sees God present and shares with others how to do the same? Listen again to what Matthew records Jesus as saying

"Anyone who welcomes you welcomes me, and anyone who welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me. Whoever welcomes a prophet as a prophet will receive a prophet's reward, and whoever welcomes a righteous person as a righteous person will receive a righteous person's reward. And if anyone gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones who is my disciple, truly I tell you, that person will certainly not lose their reward." Amen.