

Reflections for 6th September 2020

13th Sunday after Trinity

Breaking and Mending

In one of my previous parishes, a church member came to me one day and apologised for missing church meetings. She explained that she was a volunteer doing mediation work as part of a local project that tried to help resolve disputes between neighbours. I told her not to worry, because, although we missed her at our gatherings, it seemed to me that her mediation work was an important part of following Jesus, and living out the gospel.

Our Bible readings this week do not make for easy and comfortable reading. The passage from Ezekiel spells out the consequences of sin and separation from God, although it also reminds us that God longs to forgive those who are sorry for what they have done wrong. Alongside that the Bible story we have chosen this week is the story of the 'Fall', as Adam and Eve find that their relationship with God has been broken by their disobedience. And the passage from Romans is an encouragement to 'fulfil the law' and live the right way by loving our neighbour.

The gospel reading offers us guidance about how to deal with problems and arguments, showing us that the first Christians made mistakes and got things wrong, as we do. If they had been perfect and saintly all the time, there wouldn't have been any need to tell them those things. But they did need to be told, and guided and encouraged – and so do we.

It seems to me that we are surrounded by so much in our culture and media that revels in conflict, and even tries to provoke it, just to entertain us. But what we need is help to deal with conflict in a positive way, and mend broken relationships in our broken world, and that is what we are offered by God in Jesus Christ. Perhaps there is something that you could do today, with God's help, to show love and care for your neighbour – and play your part in mending the brokenness of our world.

Revd John Waller

Merciful God,
you know our struggle to serve you:
when sin spoils our lives and overshadows our hearts,
come to our aid and turn us back to you again;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Bible readings: Ezekiel 33: 7-11; Romans 13: 8-14; Matthew 18: 15-20

This week's Story: 'A Sad Day: The story of the fall' (based on Genesis chapter 3)