

Evensong Reflection

Luke Price, 14 April 24

In Revelation 2:-3 the early churches are examined, Jesus knows them intimately, he praises them, but he does something else also - he shows them their faults. Jesus shines light on their darkness, so that their churches may once more be the light on top of the hill.

These letters are ones we must reflect upon as a church today, what holds us back? We must be mindful of the duty of upholding, preserving and expanding because the Church belongs to us as its people. The church of Ephesus was one of the earliest Christian communities. It had suffered greatly for its faith and was praised highly by St. Paul. St. John and St. Mary are even believed to have visited or lived there. It was a place of devout prayer and commitment to Christ.

While the letter in revelation talks about the perseverance of the church of Ephesus, they had not remained perseverant in the commands they had been given. "You have forsaken the love you had at first" - what daunting, such painful words. The church which had such an encounter with Jesus was no longer what it was. It had forgotten the efforts of the first generation of Christians. How was it that such a sudden transition could take place, and what do we do to ensure we learn from these writings as a church today?

We are not unfamiliar with the church of two millennia ago, we ought always to be mindful of our commitment to the commandments, love the Lord your God with all you heart, and love your neighbour as yourself. There is none other commandment greater than these, on these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets. It always returns to this, the oak tree may look lavish and green, but its roots are what made it.

God asked the church of Ephesus to return to its roots, we too must follow this commandment. There is no greater set back for us than when we lose love, it impacts not only our relationships with others, but our entire relationship with creation.

By living the life of love, the church has been transformed from minuscule groups scattered in distant lands to the largest group of worshipers globally. That position cannot be held in division, in hatred or violence, only the church of love can do this. If the letter was addressed to us, our faults may be many, but let it never be said that we are not a church that radiates God's love.