

St Nicholas Sighthill Parish Church
Sermon: Sunday 16th November 2014:
1 Corinthians 15:19-23 & 1 John 4:7-11

Reference:John Stott, Bible Speaks Today, Coming Alive (Rev J R H Middleton, Alpha Course, Lion Handbook of the Bible)

1 Corinthians 15:19-23

¹⁹ If our hope in Christ is good for this life only and no more, then we deserve more pity than anyone else in all the world.

²⁰ But the truth is that Christ has been raised from death, as the guarantee that those who sleep in death will also be raised. ²¹ For just as death came by means of a man, in the same way the rising from death comes by means of a man. ²² For just as all people die because of their union with Adam, in the same way all will be raised to life because of their union with Christ. ²³ But each one will be raised in proper order: Christ, first of all; then, at the time of his coming, those who belong to him.

1 John 4:7-11 God Is Love

⁷ Dear friends, let us love one another, because love comes from God. Whoever loves is a child of God and knows God. ⁸ Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love. ⁹ And God showed his love for us by sending his only Son into the world, so that we might have life through him. ¹⁰ This is what love is: it is not that we have loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the means by which our sins are forgiven.

¹¹ Dear friends, if this is how God loved us, then we should love one another.

Message: Recap from previous weeks on the Christian Faith, the vows and facts so far are:

Vow 1: I believe in one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit; and I confess Jesus Christ as my Saviour and Lord.

Vow 2: I promise to join regularly with my fellow Christians in worship on the Lord's Day.

5 facts about Jesus:

- Showed remarkable power (miracles)

- Made amazing claims (I am the way)
- Lived with perfect purity (free of sin)
- Spoke with authority (son of man)
- Died & rose again (seen by many)

6 Paul's records of the risen Jesus.....

1. Peter (also mentioned in Luke)
2. The Twelve (included Matthias)
3. 500 of the brothers at the same time.
4. James (the Lord's brother, not James-Apostle).
5. The Apostles, included more than the 12.
6. Lastly He appeared to Saul, who was later called Paul.

Six more appearances of the risen Jesus in the Gospels...

1. Mary Magdalene at the open tomb
2. Cleopas and his companion on the walk to Emmaus on Easter Day
3. The disciples and followers in the house in Jerusalem that evening when Thomas was absent
4. Thomas and the disciples one week later
5. The 7 fishermen in the boat at Galilee (John 21)
6. The ascension into heaven

From the start of their new lives, the disciples of Jesus proclaimed that the good news had its very heart in the death that Jesus died on the cross and that He rose again from death.

But why did he die?

He died unjustly.....he had done nothing wrong.

He died purposefully.

Jesus stressed through His preaching that not only would He die but, that as the promised Saviour, He must die.

With nothing less than His death would He accomplish the salvation that had been promised throughout the Old Testament by God.

It was to bring that promise to fruition and make it a reality that Jesus died.

He died willingly.....he had to show total credibility with all people.

Jesus has total credibility - He went through all human rejection and suffering and can look anyone in the eye, and says to us today:

“I know how you feel. I went through the same pain during my arrest, trial, beatings and crucifixion. My family were asylum seekers, my father died early in my life and my brothers and sisters rejected me for a long time. The establishment could not cope with my teachings of scripture and when I was brought up, we lived under Roman occupation.

Yes I know the world is tough and unfair. That is because God gave all people freewill and some choose to live life in selfish and self-centred ways pursuing wealth, health and power at all costs and treat people with less respect than animals. These are transient concepts, none last for ever.....but I am the God of yesterday, today and tomorrow. I will always be here, and always ready to welcome you into my arms.”

What does dying on the cross mean?

¹ John 4: 7-11 - unconditional love

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This is the way we are to live.....

This is the God we are to trust.

We all know that no one is perfect.

We all fall short of the standards of God.

We sometimes do our own thing, in our own ways, ignoring God's teaching and unconditional love.

But Jesus has shown us how to live the life of obedience and hence human sin has been forgiven by God if we show obedience to Him by following the example of Jesus.

Forgiveness is open to all people, if they turn to Jesus by repenting their sins, saying they are truly sorry for their failings to one another and to God - but they have to mean it.

If our relationship is right with God, then our relationships with one another and within our families improve over time.

So we get to the stage in life, where we can willingly accept God's forgiveness and unconditional love and try to treat other people in the same way that we expect to be treated ourselves.

(((The essence of sin is man substituting himself for God.....

Whilst the essence of salvation is God substituting himself for man...J R W Stott.....)))

How should we respond ????

Face the future with love. Face the future with hope and accept an inner peace that only God can give you.

Surprisingly then we can face death with joy knowing that through Jesus our saviour there is life after we pass through the door called death.

Yes, the dying process is painful - to see a loved ones suffer the effects of failing minds and bodies and to experience such failing health ourselves - but we know that, through Jesus, death is not the end of life.

The Apostles including Paul demonstrated remarkable COURAGE in the face of all adversities after Jesus' ascension into heaven (e.g. Acts 27:22)

Courage is not the absence of fear, but the ability to go on in spite of it. It takes courage to cope with local teenagers causing much noise and disruption as they run around the blocks of flats at night - but if you have faith in Jesus, then you can cope with such fears.

The Apostles had a sense of purpose (Acts 27:23)

i.e. to live for Christ and in Christ, and then they could cope with all the storms in life.

How many people have a real sense of purpose in life? How often do you hear people say they are just drifting in life and their lives are rudderless, or

depend upon wealth or success or buying the latest fashion to make themselves feel good?

The Apostles could sense the PRESENCE of God (Acts 27:25)

The Apostles knew the heart and character of God. They trusted God to do what He said He would do.

If we are to exhibit wisdom then we too should trust in God.

Does it matter how we respond????

Yes it does....we are either for Him or against him, being indifferent to Christ is the same as being against Him.

Depending upon that response, we will either be with Him in heaven or without Him dead. We may not like it but the bible is very clear - there is life after death, if we die in faith.

The Good News of the Gospel is that we are forgiven by God when we turn to Jesus for new life and we can look forward to life after death.

And so scripture says to us:

Be faithful in reading the Bible, and in prayer and you will be amazed how your life changes for the better and how you can cope with all matters, and that is how the third vow reads:

Vow 3: I promise to be faithful in reading the Bible, and in prayer.

It is only spending time reflecting on God's word and in prayer, that we can change and grow in faith as individuals and as a church family. In the time we have for a sermon or message we can only quote a few scripture readings, but regular time in reading scripture and in prayer....that nurtures your soul.

As we progress through the 5 vows of the Christian Faith, come to Jesus now, in perhaps a way you have never done before.

Put your life in the hands of Jesus.

Come back to Him if you feel that you have drifted away from Him and His Church, allow His love and teachings to secure you in the storms of

life by reading the Bible and spending time in prayer.....and remember the most effective prayers are often the silent ones. Amen.