

Following Jesus - Reflection

Our reading this Sunday comes from Philippians 1:21-30. It opens with the challenging words from Paul's own life, "*For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.*" Paul continues to express how his utmost desire is to die so he can be with Jesus, yet he is convinced that God wants him to live so he can continue his mission to witness to the Gospel and build disciples.

I'm guessing for many of us our faith is not yet in a place where we can entirely echo those words of Paul. Yet, as I have been reflecting on Covid-19 and particularly if I were to die having caught the virus, I realise that in so many ways it would be a gain. Being in the presence of Jesus all the time would be truly wonderful - and I would be able to sing with the whole company of heaven! Yet I would be worried about my family and how they would be able to cope in my absence.

When Paul wrote to the Philippians church I don't think he was expecting all of them to follow his opening words, but as he continues in v27 of the passage he would instruct believers to live lives worthy of the Gospel of Christ. This means, not being scared to show we belong to Christ. It means living out the love of Christ with all those around us, allowing God's overwhelming grace to be seen through us. But also, to recognise that this life is just a moment in comparison to our eternal future and so I think we should always have one eye on eternity, and as we do this our priorities in this life will change.

This is quite a challenge, but following Jesus is a challenge and often in times of crisis this can be even more the case. But we must remember that throughout our lives, in the good times and the bad, Jesus is with us through the Holy Spirit. And it is only through the power of the Spirit working in us that we can ever get near to a faith like Paul. And until that time, I would simply encourage you to keep Jesus at the centre of all you do, so we that our lives witness to Him and God's glory.

Prayer

Help me God to trust in you.

Let me be open to your Holy Spirit transforming my heart,

So my priorities are changed to be your priorities.

Lead me in the way of the cross,

Knowing that you are with me for the whole journey.

In your name I pray Jesus. Amen.

