

+WEEKLY SERMON

communicate@blackburn.anglican.org



Fearfully and wonderfully made

This week marked a significant milestone for my 16-year-old, along with thousands of other young people who collected their GCSE results on Thursday. It's a day filled with anticipation, joy, relief, and sometimes disappointment. As someone who works in education, I see the messages of support and encouragement which accompany this day each year but having journeyed through the exam season with my son, I have naturally been more aware of the emotions provoked. I admit that as a parent, I got off quite lightly and the impact of exam stress didn't manifest itself in our household as I know it has in others, but we've still experienced moments of anxiety and dips in self-confidence.

As Christians, whatever stage in life we're at, it's reassuring to know that Jesus never measured people by their achievements. He saw hearts, not CVs. When he called his disciples, he chose fishermen and tax collectors - ordinary people! This tells us that God values character, faith, and obedience far more than worldly success. Our worth is not defined by our accomplishments but by the unchanging truth that we are deeply loved by God.

One of my favourite Bible verses is Psalm 139:14:

"I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well."

"Fearfully and wonderfully made" means we were crafted with care, intention, and love. That's not something you can measure with a test or a checklist! And so, in a world where there's constant pressure to be successful – to do more and be more, this verse communicates that our value isn't something we earn. It's a reminder that we don't have to hustle for worth because we already have it! Even on days when we feel like we've failed or fallen short, this doesn't change.

Psalm 139:14 is a call to rest in the knowledge that we are enough. It's a call to gratitude, not performance. When we really take that in, it can shift how we live - less striving, more peace; less comparison, more compassion. So maybe today, instead of asking "What can I achieve?" we can ask, "How can I live in the truth that I'm wonderfully made?" Our identity is in Christ and therefore, God can use every experience—success or failure—for his glory and our growth.

Sarah Earnshaw - Diocesan Children's Work Adviser

HEALTHY CHURCHES TRANSFORMING COMMUNITIES