

WEEKLY SERMON

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What unites us is more than what divides us

'And I myself have seen and have testified that this is the Son of God.' John 1:34

A few months ago, when leading a Bible study, we hit one of those controversial passages of scripture, where some people interpret it one way, and others interpret it differently.

I can't recall the passage, but one of the group objected very strongly to the interpretation I was putting forward.

The discussion continued, but it was clear that the two interpretations were not compatible with each other. In the heated dialogue we lost sight of what united as Christian people and focussed on what was different about each other. The study ended with this man walking out.

Last week, purely by chance, I heard that he is due to be baptised and confirmed in another church, in another diocese.

Once I got over my initial shock I was reminded that, although we sometimes express our faith differently, sometimes we believe slightly different things, yet, at the core of our faith we focus on the same thing: Jesus.

It is the start of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, today (Saturday, January 18); a week where we pray and work towards 'being one' as Christian brothers and sisters.

Our Gospel reading for Sunday contains the gem of a declaration at the start of this piece from John the Baptist, that Jesus is the Son of God.

In the next paragraph John says 'here is the lamb of God' and as a result two disciples follow him. It is Jesus that they follow, not a doctrine or a style of worship, not what someone believes about a controversial issue, but Jesus, the man who is God.

Jesus is the centre of our faith. It is him who we live in relationship with. He is God made flesh. He is the author and perfecter of our faith.

We may disagree about many things in how we practice our faith, but let us remember that in each Christian that we disagree with there is a fellow believer; someone who loves God and can say: 'I myself have seen and have testified that this is the Son of God.'

Rev Calum Crombie

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