

# WEEKLY SERMON

communicate@blackburn.anglican.org



## God's everlasting mercy and love

***“Remember, Lord, your compassion and love, for they are from everlasting” (Psalm 25:6)***

Every year, as sleepy summer slumbers into autumn my husband gives me a gift.

It does not hold any monetary value, but to me it is one of the most precious things in the world. It is the first conker of the season that he sees lying on the ground, shining, nut brown; nature's jewel.

This year, on holiday, as we walked the streets of Oxford he bent down and found this year's present; rather surprising as there were no discernible horse chestnut trees around.

But as he placed the conker in the palm of my hand, we noticed that this was not the perfect specimen we have come to usually expect. This conker was broken, cracked, imperfect; it had *“...no beauty, no majesty to attract us, no appearance to win our hearts.”* (Isaiah 53:2)

My response was to reject it, to throw it away, to wait and look for a more unblemished conker; but something stopped me.

As I gazed at it lying in my hand, at the brokenness before us, I felt God pointing to the brokenness of the world. And yet, I could not discard it, because as it lay in my hand, it was as if God was holding this brokenness in the palm of His hand.

So, I popped it in my pocket as a reminder to pray for our world.

The next day we were walking in the grounds of Blenheim Palace, when suddenly there was a snap in the air, an object came tumbling down to the ground, brushing past my arm, making me start in surprise.

A green spiky conker shell, cracked open, and a bright shining conker fell out. I bent down, the conker was perfect, brand new, beautiful...no blemish, no marks.

As I scooped up this perfect specimen, it seemed, this time, God was saying, out of this brokenness I am making all things new; I can take the damaged and mend it, I can take the sickness and heal it, I can seal up the cracks, for out of death I bring the hope of life.

We have a God of compassion and love who will never abandon us and as Jesus suffered and died, he rose again...

This year, I have two conkers as a reminder of God's everlasting mercy and love.

**Rev Karen Herschell**

**Curate at Ribchester St Wilfrid (in plurality with) Hurst Green and Mitton**

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