

WEEKLY SERMON

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The glory of God - human beings fully alive

John is clear. The glory of God which followed the people through the wilderness years of exile was known to be present in the cloud of Shekinah.

In his gospel John makes it clear that this glory is now seen fully in the person of Jesus. To have seen Jesus is to see the glory of God. This means that the reality of the incarnation is God's Presence, his glory, always with us.

John sees this in the person of Jesus on earth, but the church has come to understand that this is also seen now in the gift of the Spirit.

For us that is both exciting and a challenge. The excitement being that it is glorious to know that God is present in this way and form permanently.

However, the challenge is that we are described in the scriptures as Temples of the Holy Spirit - the glory of God is seen in and through us and our actions.

I do not know about you but on my less wonderful days I am quite challenged by the thought that God's glory is seen and lived in and through me, but that's what scripture says. The glory of God is seen in a human being fully alive.

Of course, the human being in whom that was seen most perfectly is Jesus and our responsibility is to carry on as Jesus' followers his calling to be his body in the world.

In today's gospel Jesus expresses this through two images.

The first is the one of the grain of wheat falling into the earth and dying. Losing life to gain it is the kind of apparent paradox that we need to understand if we are to be followers of Jesus.

We need to lose sense of self-importance whilst never losing sight of our value in the sight of God as representing his glory. Other interests come before our own and we follow the Servant King who wash his feet. That is an implication for taking on the responsibility of being a follower of Jesus in our baptism.

The second image is that of the authority in Jesus passed on to His Church. We must proclaim Christ in His Passion and Resurrection that the world might see and behold his glory and believe.

Human beings fully alive – what a beautiful legacy.

Archdeacon David Picken

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