

WEEKLY SERMON

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The same Lord is Lord of all

Recently, I took the funeral of a gentleman who had learning difficulties.

It was a moving service where his sister spoke with tenderness about her brother; regaling memories of his life and how loved and cared for he was by the staff and residents of the home where he lived.

It was touching to see his friends attend the service as we gave thanks for his life and said our farewells. In my Address I focused on how this gentleman, and indeed all of us, are loved by God, made in His image and that we are “fearfully and wonderfully made” (Psalm 139:14)

I was particularly moved, because my sister has Down’s Syndrome and a lot of what was shared about this gentleman resonated deeply with me.

Her learning difficulties are severe with limited comprehension and speech. So, when I read these verses from Paul’s letter to the Romans I always feel a little bit cross ...

“For one believes with the heart and so is justified, and one confesses with the mouth and so is saved. Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.” (Romans 10:10-13)

If that’s the case, it begs the question is my sister saved? For how can she be saved if she is unable to believe in her heart or confess with her lips that Jesus is Lord?

Or, at least that is how I use to feel when I became a Christian 20 years ago. I had decided to follow Christ, confessing with my mouth that He was Lord of my life.

But I struggled with how this could be the case for someone like my sister and unfortunately there was no one who could really give me an answer that did not exclude my sister from the grace of God.

I have since reconciled myself to Paul’s words and as I saw the funeral party engaging with the words that were said, the pictures, the music and hymns, it was another reminder that God meets us in many ways and not just in our ‘intellectual’ minds or by spoken or heard word.

All the senses are involved and, as the Psalmist says, He who has formed us in our mother’s womb does go before us and places His hand of blessing on our heads. Indeed we cannot escape from His spirit or ever leave His presence (Psalm 139:5-7)

Rev Karen Herschell, Vicar of Balderstone, Mellor and Sablesbury

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