



The Aldershot and North Camp Anchor

Issue 13: Sunday 28th June 2020

Dear Friends,

A few days ago, I read a news report about how a passenger on a train had lost some property which had later been found by another passenger and handed in to the railway lost property office. Not very newsworthy you might think. However, in this case the item that was lost was not the usual umbrella or raincoat, but was a parcel containing about 3 Kg of gold with a value in the region of £152,000.



This happened in Switzerland and, according to the news report, the parcel of gold has not yet been claimed. I'm not sure which is the most remarkable aspect of this story – the fact that the gold was lost in the first place or the fact that no one has yet come forward to say it belongs to them!

I can remember that, when I was at school, I once left my clarinet on the school bus. I can vividly remember running through a series of footpaths in the hope of intercepting the bus later on in its route. Despite my best efforts, I didn't manage to catch up with the bus, but fortunately another pupil noticed the clarinet case and took it home and then later returned it to me.



The reasons why we search for something are many and varied. Perhaps the lost item is needed to enable us to do something (such as a bunch of keys or a particular recipe

book), or perhaps it has a particular 'sentimental value' (such as an engagement ring or a photograph album) or, perhaps less frequently, because the item has significant financial value.

In Luke's Gospel chapter 15, we find three parables about things that have been lost as Jesus tells stories about a lost sheep, a lost coin and a lost son. In each case, the description of the person who searches and looks out for what is lost is used by Jesus to provide an insight into the depth of God's gracious love for all of creation.

In those stories we can read about the shepherd leaving the ninety-nine to search for the one lost sheep, and about the woman who 'turns the house upside down' as she looks for her lost coin, and about the father who waits looking towards the horizon looking for a sign of the return of a much loved 'prodigal' son.



Those three parables describe the God who "loved the world so much that he gave his one and only son.." (John 3 v 16).

Unlike the parcel of gold left on a train in Switzerland, we can know that we are deeply valued by God who reaches out to us all with love and grace. Through the death and resurrection of Jesus, God's love reaches out to us when we are lost so that we can be welcomed home into the warmth of God's love.

Yours in His service, *Chris Blake*

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Worship Reflection

I trust in your unfailing love; my heart rejoices in your salvation. I will sing the Lord's praise, for he has been good to me. (Psalm 13 v 5 and 6)

Hymn (StF 17)

With gladness we worship, rejoice as we sing,
Free hearts and free voices, how blessed to bring!
The old thankful story shall scale thine
abode, Thou King of all glory, most bountiful God!

Prayer

Gracious God, for your blessing beyond deserving, your mercy beyond all reason and your love that knows no bounds, receive our praise and help us to show our gratitude by showing the same compassion in our dealings with others as you have shown to us. Amen

Bible Reading (Matthew 10 v 40-42)

'Anyone who welcomes you welcomes me, and anyone who welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me. Whoever welcomes a prophet as a prophet will receive a prophet's reward, and whoever welcomes a righteous person as a righteous person will receive a righteous person's reward. And if anyone gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones who is my disciple, truly I tell you, that person will certainly not lose their reward.'

Reflection

Chapter 10 of Matthew's Gospel records Jesus giving a series of instructions to his disciples as they prepare to be sent out on mission.

At the very end of these instructions, Jesus offers a very practical challenge to care for others as part of our Christian discipleship.

The phrase 'one of these little ones' can be used to speak about children, but in this context the phrase refers to the whole community of the followers of Jesus and particularly those who might be seen as insignificant or vulnerable. The care we are to offer others might be as simple and straightforward as 'a cup of cold water'. In the hot climate of the Middle East, such an act of care would be greatly appreciated in practical terms, but it is also symbolic of an attitude of care for others who are in places of difficulty.

The original Greek wording literally reads "a cup of cold water only" so emphasising the modest nature of the gift. Sometimes we can feel that we have limited resources to help others, but Jesus' use of the image of "a cup of cold water only" reminds us that, when we think about caring for others, each of us has something to give.



Prayers of Intercession

We pray especially this week for -

- Politicians and scientists as social distancing rules are reviewed and relaxed.
- Families and teachers as schools gradually welcome more year groups back to school.
- Those who face additional difficulties in accessing medical care in these days.

Gracious God, we ask these prayers through Jesus Christ, our risen Lord and Saviour. Amen

Hymn (StF 611)

Brother, sister, let me serve you;
let me be as Christ to you;
pray that I may have the grace to
let you be my servant too.

Final Prayer

Fill our hearts with your grace, O Lord, our souls with your love, and our lives with your glory, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Methodist Church is encouraging us all to 'tell our stories'. You are invited to choose a Bible or hymn or song verse, or perhaps a prayer that you have read or written, and to describe why what you have chosen is particularly important to you. Contributions need to be no longer than 250 words.



This week's contribution is from David Betts a Local Preacher from North Camp.



"Our God contracted to a span,
Incomprehensibly made man"

I remember as a child of maybe 6 or 7 singing these words from Wesley's hymn "Let earth and heaven combine" at Rayne Road Methodist Church, Braintree, Essex. I sensed there

was power in those words for no other reason than they were big words... and I didn't understand them. I read those words as "God quite unbelievably made us" (man)

But then the proverbial penny dropped and I began to grasp the magnitude of what I was singing, that,.... "God unbelievably became man"

God the unseeable could now be seen
God the untouchable could be touched
God the unknowable (in a sense) could be known
God the unreachable could now be reached by everyone

It is worth spending some time meditating on the words of this hymn for in its five verses there is richness, poetry and power that it could be argued we seldom see in some of today's hymns and songs. For instance, from verse 2

He laid his glory by,
He wrapped him in our clay;
Unmarked by human eye,
The latent Godhead lay;



Within this hymn I see what I like to call "Kingdom words". Words like "sanctified", "Godhead", "incarnate", "Immanuel" and "Deity". Words that make me stop and pay attention to what I am singing. Words that challenge me to look deeper into my theology and faith and to wrestle afresh with the enormity of the incarnation and how this is worked out in my life.

Bible Reading: © Biblica 2011. Prayers: Methodist Prayer Handbook © TMCP 2019. Some prayers taken from "2000 prayers for public worship" by Nick Fawcett. CCLI No 000295.