

Sermon Proper 6 2015

The passage from Paul's letter to the Corinthians is full of sentences that are quoted often, "walking by faith not sight", "appearing before the judgement seat of Christ" and "So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new" are some.

Last week as some of you may know I was at Le Pas Opton with Beccy for a holiday with other adults with learning disabilities. There are many wonderful things about that holiday, but it is the one place where Beccy and I can be completely ourselves. If Beccy needs her food cutting up, that's fine, so do others. If people struggle to understand her words, they struggle with others too. If she dances or waves flags in the church services that is welcomed and she is joining in with others. I can be Beccy's mum, I can go to the morning talks and Bible study or not, I can worship or not, I can choose whether to join in with things or not and nobody judges us. There are no prejudices there; we are all God's

children, loved by him, valued by him and by those around us.

These adults who struggle daily with living, with prejudice, with needs that can be undignified have such a strong faith, and they talk about it freely and expressively and often with Biblical references. They will also quite openly admit that healing has been requested for them, but it hasn't happened, but it hasn't stopped them believing.

One young man, who heard we had no musician for Faite le Plein, offered his services if after praying he felt God wanted him to and we could get a keyboard. The worship leader for that week donated his keyboard and used his guitar that night, people helped load it into the car. What is so surprising about all of this? Stephen is blind and has some other problems. But he came with us, to a strange place, told us what he would play, a mixture of old and new hymns and led us in worship. Obviously he plays by ear, but all went well and it was a very special evening.

I am telling you this because of the reading from 2 Corinthians 5: 16. In the pew Bibles on page 816 it says “So from now on we regard no-one from a worldly point of view” in the NRSV that verse reads: “ From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view”. In the Good News Bible “No longer, do we judge anyone by human standards”. Paul was being judged by the Corinthians as they felt he wasn’t as good as other teachers they had had. Paul says we are all judged by the Messiah.

As humans we are all very judgemental, even if we try hard not to be. But if we are trying to become more Christ like, we must try to remove the plank from our own eyes, become a new creation and let our old behaviours, prejudices and judgemental attitudes pass away. It is so easy for us to be judgemental, whether it is the casual, superficial remark ‘what does she think she looks like in that outfit’ to the much more serious. I have to be honest and say that I had some concerns about Stephen playing for us, that was me being prejudiced about someone’s gifts and talents.

We all carry different burdens, we will all be judged by our living God, how we helped others, how we loved others, how we tried to change from our human ways to Christ’s ways will be a matter for him to judge.