

Reflection 11 July 2020

God delights in you!

Something I read the other day in the New Daylight Bible readings about pilgrimage made me stop and think – the writer, Sally Welch, pointed out that one of the most important lessons we learn is wherever you journey you always take yourself with you! And as such we need to forgive and love ourselves, just as God forgives and loves us – ‘Easier said than done,’ you may say! Being a perfectionist myself I know I have a little nagging voice saying, ‘Could have done better!’ But if we come to realise that to God each one of us is infinitely precious and deeply loved, we can start to grow into the person God truly made us to be. And then we will be able to share that wonderful love with others we meet along the way too.

There is a lovely scene in ‘The Shack’ by Wm. Paul Young where the character Mackenzie, full of deep hurt, meets God. God is depicted as an African American woman and she not only runs to embrace Mackenzie and lifts him off the ground but exclaims, ‘I have really been looking forward to seeing you face to faceMy, my, my, how I do love you!’ This speaks to me of the deep love God has for each one of us. There are more amazing illustrations in this book of the interweaving of the Trinity - Father, Son & Holy Spirit - but I’ll leave that for you to explore further if you wish.

God’s amazing love is also shown in creation – in ‘The Shack’ just before Mackenzie’s encounter with God, the landscape is transformed from a deep bitter winter into the wonders of a flower filled spring. If we take time to stop and really look at God’s creation we cannot fail to be amazed by the detail and care he/she has lavished on it.



Charlie Houlder-Moat, our Reader-in-Training, has been helping us to do just that in ‘Wild Church’ www.stmaryswatton.org

And maybe these Bible passages speak to you about God's great love for us:

Consider how the wild flowers grow. They do not labour or spin. Yet I tell you, not even Solomon in all his splendour was dressed like one of these. If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today, and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, how much more will he clothe you Luke **12:27-28a**

Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? **Matthew 6:26**

What are the things which may keep us from loving ourselves? In life we all pick up baggage along the way and sometimes the sheer weight of heartache for ourselves or someone else can seem too much. How do we balance both grief and joy – we all need joy in life to keep ourselves stable. Maybe taking time to stop and wonder at God's creation can refresh our souls. And to quote from one of the 'Wild Church' sessions 'Where in the midst of our



chaotic lives do we find a holy place?'

Perhaps in a park or a garden – at the end of one of

the Gardeners' World programmes recently, in addition to 'Jobs for the weekend' Monty Don said, 'You need to **stop** to notice the wonders right there in your garden and hear all the sounds around you.' I think that's what attracts me to gardening – and just being outside, whatever the weather is a big fillip.

To end I would like to quote a couple of sayings about God's love for us from Mother Julian whom I always find very inspirational:

As by his courtesy God forgives our sin when we repent, even so he wills that we should forgive our sin, and so give up our senseless worrying and faithless fear.

He is quick to clasp us to himself, for we are his joy and his delight, and he is our salvation and our life.