

Hinde Street Methodist Church

Sunday 21 March 2021

11.00am Paul Boateng

May I have the tongue to speak and you the ears to hear only that which glorifies His Wondrous name

Sisters and Brothers in Christ this is the Sunday in which we turn towards Calvary the beginning of Christ's Passion as we move to the foot of the Cross and all that is to follow

It begins here in John's Gospel with we are told some Greeks come to celebrate Passover in Jerusalem with the Jews who seek out one of the Disciples "Sir We want to see Jesus" and who do they ask Phillip of course the one with the Greek name.

This is the same Philip who we are told later in John's Gospel says to Jesus Lord show us the Father that is all we need. And remember how Jesus replies " Have I been with you all this time Philip and you still don't know me "Whoever has seen me has seen the Father Believe me I am in the Father and the Father is in Me" These two Greeks don't need to be told. They want to see Jesus I wonder what they were expecting they must have known of his triumphant entry into Jerusalem of the Miracles Lazarus just recently raised from the dead.

What they found was a Man For God in his passionate love of us had sent us his only Son to live amongst us as one of us a human who identifies with us but not only us the most marginalised of us and not only understands but feels what it is to be one us with all that means and what it meant at that particular moment The gospel reading tells us just what he is feeling Jesus tells them Now my heart is troubled.

He knows he is to die as the seed dies so that the plant may grow and we might live He knows just as we know what it is to be fearful to wonder if we are up to it whether we will make it through And who amongst us hasn't experienced that amidst all the stuff that life throws at us Not least as we wrestle with the challenges of these particular times.

These are troubled and troubling times. Someone kindly asked me the other day after I'd led a Lenten Class whether the group could pray for me and if so what for. I thanked them and said yes please pray for connectivity and resilience

I didn't just mean virtual connectivity for all those anxious moments when we wonder if there will be sufficient band width for the next Zoom meeting I meant connectivity in the fullest sense of that word with my God and those around me so that I better reflect in my life and work His Kingdom so that I myself might be a better witness for that Kingdom and for his Love A prophetic Church requires that we all be engaged about his purposes in the great and small things of our lives in this World.

Methodism is engaged upon just such a programme at this time which I have recently come across #Love this calling We are reminded that we each have a role to play Its focussed on the 3Cs Celebration of our different callings Today we celebrate our Stewards Confidence in exploring what these callings might be Context encouraging us to engage with others to help them find theirs It's certainly helped me as I reflect on what it is to be a lay preacher and an activist and I commend it to you this Passion tide Just google #Love this Calling

But Connectivity isn't enough It's not enough to know what's to be done and what we might do We need to find the strength to do it I so often feel amidst all that the world throws at us simply not up to it all that is out there that is undermining all the obstacles large and small I think we've all been there and ConVid seems to amplify so much of it! What is that the Spiritual says "Sometimes I feel discouraged and think my works in vain" That's when "I want to see Jesus" "I want to see Jesus "

I want to see Jesus because he's been there He went through so much worse Gave himself for us God made him human The son of Man offered himself for us "Shall I say Father do not let this hour come to me? But that is why I came So that I might go through this hour of suffering Father bring glory to your name" That is the assurance that we need and that we can find if only we open our ears to it. Whether it's a clap of Thunder as some said, the Angels as others said or more likely in our lives the still small voice that says go on it'll be all right I love you. It's offered now freely and for all time because He went down that road to Calvary suffered the agonies of the cross. 'When I am lifted up from the earth I will draw everyone to me "He was indeed foretelling the manner of his death as John tells us.

He was doing more for with the Resurrection we are called to lift up the cross not as an instrument of torture death and degradation but as a symbol of freedom love and eternal life. The challenge for us is to seek to build a prophetic church that is active in the day to day task of bringing the world into accord with what Christ wants for this world Peace Justice and the Integrity of Creation The challenge is to discern our calling and make ourselves fit for that purpose to be part of that work

Yes we are frail flawed and needy but Jesus doesn't mind He has time for us He has made time for us He has given us Gods time All we have to do is to turn up and seek him out just like those Greeks and Say I want to see Jesus and Say I want to see Jesus and then though I May feel discouraged and think my life's in vain as the song goes when i ask and want to see Jesus Why "then the Holy Spirit revives my Soul again" So though I cannot "preach like Peter "and I cannot" pray like Paul I can tell of the love of Jesus and say He died for all". That's the love of Jesus He died for us. He died so that we might live. He became man and died because he loves us This is not some indifferent uncaring God who toys with us mere Mortals The God those Greeks asked after and found is the Son of Man the God of Love the Living God So let's ask too Shall we Let's unmute ourselves risk the consequences and ask say will you not just in your heart but with your voice "I want to see Jesus! I want to see Jesus" And By God's Grace When We Ask Speak Listen and Act in his Name We Will We Too Will See And Know Him Jesus Christ the King.