

8 May 2022

Living Life with the Risen Jesus - John 10:22-30

The readings we heard from Revelation and John I find beautiful. We heard the angel telling about the people John saw; “they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore, ‘they are before the throne of God and serve him day and night in his temple; and he who sits on the throne will shelter them with his presence. Never again will they hunger; never again will they thirst. The sun will not beat down on them, nor any scorching heat. For the Lamb at the centre of the throne will be their shepherd; he will lead them to springs of living water. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.’ (Rev. 9:1-17)

This speaks to my soul. It is a picture of the life I’d want to be living. But is that all it is, a nice bit of poetry. No reality for today, just a nice bit of poetry to make you feel good. Is that all we have here?

Is that all baptism is; a nice ritual that we perform to make us feel good?

From the Gospel of John we had part of that iconic passage from John 10 where we heard Jesus say; ‘My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one will snatch them out of my hand.’ (John 10:22-30)

Was Jesus just giving us a nice picture or is this reality? Can we really listen, in other words hear Jesus voice? Is this a reality for Connor, who is now one of Jesus’ flock? Or is this just flowery language without any reality to it?

I’m sure we’d all reject the idea that this is just picture language. I’m sure we’d all believe this to be real. I’m sure we’d all want to take Jesus at his word. If he says it he must mean it.

In baptism Connor is claimed as part of Jesus kingdom, one of Father’s children. Connor is one of those people who has been washed clean by the blood of the Lamb.

So what does that mean in his daily life? After all if God says it, it must be true. In other words he delivers.

That’s what makes the Devil a liar; he’ll promise you the earth but he can’t deliver = liar.

What Jesus says, Jesus delivers. That's the whole point of his birth, life, crucifixion, resurrection and promised return. Jesus delivers; he's not full of hot air.

Would you agree with that, or am I just ranting and raving?

Jesus delivers on what he says; this being true, I ask myself; 'how do I live out this reality?' How do I live daily with the risen and very much alive Jesus? How will we teach Connor to live out this reality, to live in this reality?

Sadly there are so many lies that surround us saying they are the way to fullness of life. John 10 has some of my favourite words from Jesus. He says; "The thief's purpose is to steal and kill and destroy. My purpose is to give them a rich and satisfying life.' (Jn. 10:10)

A more familiar way to translate the last section is; "I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full." (Jn. 10:10)

Will this be a reality for Connor if he wins Lotto, or if he becomes the most popular boy in school with all the girls are madly in love with him? The devil wants you to believe so; but it's a lie.

The other day I amazingly heard that Ronald Reagan consulted the stars; that's astrology, before making a decision. Will the stars give fullness of life? Will this form of witchcraft give life or death?

Just because something appears to have power, doesn't make it right, or good, or the way to find fullness of life.

Listening to Jesus and following him is fullness of life in action.

Living washed in the blood of the Lamb so that we can be before God day and night is fullness of life in action.

Did you notice that 'day and night we're in his temple'? The temple isn't in Jerusalem. The temple is still on earth today. The temple is the place God dwells, lives, resides, is personally present. The temple today is a living one, made up of people.

Connor is now part of that place where God resides, personally, in a relationship of love and affection, lived out in a conversation atmosphere; because we know and follow, Jesus' voice. It's not an image, it's the reality we get to live in, daily.

So I pray that Connor grows up in this wonderful relationship, and doesn't live by what other people say or do to him. Which is easier said than done, for I think we all can take personal criticism to heart; even if we're told it's not personal. I also think we all love to be told how good we are and feed off those words of praise from other people.

Neither way leads to fullness of life; both leave you as a slave to other people's opinion. So I pray that Connor lives for the audience of one, listening to Jesus voice, walking intimately with him.

That's where true freedom is found, where true freedom is lived out. Living for that audience of one means we can live true to who we are in every and any circumstance.

That's what Jesus did, does. You can crucify him and it won't change who he is. Jesus trusted his Father, who raised him to life. Jesus lives true to who he is, so he didn't dump on Peter, but heals Peter, for Jesus isn't determined by Peter. Peter is determined by Jesus.

Isn't that great. Connor doesn't determine Jesus, Jesus determines Connor and Jesus view of Connor will never change. Connor can trust Jesus with his life; trust Jesus voice with his life, follow Jesus lead with his life.

So this isn't mere picture language but foundational to life; the life we live today. Jesus determines Connor's identity, his value and purpose in life

So Connor can live true to who he is in Jesus; he's Father's loved child, in whom he delights. Those words spoken by Father at Jesus baptism are for us, for we are baptised into Jesus. And Jesus has given his life that this is now our reality.

Sure Connor will make mistakes; big ones, bad ones, unintentional ones, intentional ones, but in Jesus Connor is never determined by his mistake or his perceived successes. Connor is Father's loved child in whom he delights.

God's Spirit resides in Connor, personally. These are what determine who Connor is. So in Jesus Connor can say; 'Sorry I made a mistake, forgive me.' His identity, his value in no way shape or form has changed. In Jesus Connor is never a mistake; always a loved child of Father, who delights in him.

Did you notice what happened when Jesus lived true to who he is. When Jesus listened to his Father and followed. The hate, the vengeance and jealousy of those around him didn't shape him. Jesus ends up shaping everything. He shapes the

cross into a symbol of hope, of love, of forgiveness, of oneness with God. No longer a symbol of fear but of love and forgiveness.

Jesus shapes the world, the world doesn't shape him. That's fullness of life. That's how to live a rich and satisfying life.

So I pray Connor is taught to speak with his heavenly Father, and expect a reply. I pray Connor gets to know Jesus voice and follow him.

I pray Connor asks Jesus lots of questions, living true to who he is in Jesus. I pray Connor will grow in that intimate relationship of love and affection Jesus has made a reality.

I pray Connor hears Jesus voice; whether that be an idea, or in nature, or through the bible, or a word, or spark of brilliance. I pray Connor hears Jesus and spends his life in conversation with Jesus.

Jesus invites us to ask; to talk, openly and honestly with him. This isn't a picture, it's the reality we get to enjoy. Ask Jesus; ask Jesus this week that life question that you've been thinking about. Ask Jesus how to do that job around the house, at work, with your friends. Ask; fully expecting Jesus to answer, because he's promised to be there.

So why wouldn't Jesus answer; that first thought. I'm sure Jesus wouldn't let the devil answer it; would he. Ask, grab that first thought, idea, impression, word, picture, feeling, and enter the conversation; go and do it, trusting that it is Jesus.

Why wouldn't it be Jesus, he keeps his word; doesn't he!

So I pray as you have these conversations with Jesus you invite Connor to be part of them, to join in, so that he fully expects Jesus to speak into his life. So that Connor fully expects to hear the voice of the Good Shepherd, and follow Jesus into that rich and satisfying life he's promised for us, for Connor.

Ask, Listen, Do; be living life daily with the risen, very much alive Jesus, enjoying his loving presence in all you do.

Today I invite you to live the reality of a risen Jesus and take on two actions; Ask Jesus what he wants to talk about and then listen, and follow his lead. Ask Jesus that life question; grab the first response and do it. Today be living the reality of Jesus' presence; he's not fictional, he's alive and well. Ask, Listen, Do.