

Introduction

“you won’t feel the benefit”

“ne’er cast a clout ‘til May is out”

“You never saw a rabbit wearing glasses”

“you’ll have your eye out with that”

“you’ll catch your death”

“Early to bed early to rise,”

I wonder what phrases you can remember from your childhood that seemed really annoying at the time but as you’ve gone through life you’ve come to value them and horror of horrors find yourself turning into your parents and repeating them to your own children.

I wonder what words of wisdom have already been said to *N* that her mum and dad never thought they’d end up saying?

“don’t talk with your mouth full”

Many phrases relate to dinner time manners but there is also a collective wisdom that our society buys into or not throughout the ages. The need for a day of rest has its origins in the Sabbath ordained by God in the ten commandments. The wisdom of disciplining a child as an act of love originates in the proverbs. The benefit of discipline and taking a Sabbath day’s rest are known but less and less adopted by our culture

Proverbs chapter 8 says this

Does not wisdom call,
and does not understanding raise her voice?

But no amount of telling someone will enable them to get it – it has to be experienced. Truth, deep truth about the way of the world has to be lived out.

We relate to expressions

... and phrases throughout life yet the depth and the truth of them only sinks in as we apply them to our experiences. Wise words spoken to us in situations of earlier life come back to revisit us and we learn that without going through something we often wouldn't have appreciated the wisdom of a saying that applied to that situation. Annoying, isn't it?

Readers of the OT alone would have been familiar with the idea that like the Spirit hovering over the waters in Genesis, in Proverbs we read of Wisdom also being there at the beginning of time, an expression of the pre-incarnate Jesus. It reads as though Wisdom was more a priority even than forming Creation

Wisdom serves to reveal truth at a pace we can handle

... although the Spirit has revealed everything to the disciples yet we read there is truth that they have yet to understand. I suggest this is the depth to which we understand something, the extent to which we really trust God with our lives. The question to Peter – do you love me was asked three times as if to test the depth rather than the concept of what it means for the apostle to really give his all when following Jesus.

What's knowable and bearable is constraining revelation to each of us

We don't know more than the disciples did. There's a sense of what's knowable about who G and JC is an ongoing reality – the nature of a believer's journey – how do you grow in or see different perspectives of this relationship into which you are invited. The text reveals the nature of relationship which is always moving and shifting- that's the nature of faith – constant new perspectives and wondering and seeing new things.

The role of Wisdom

..is that she reveals to those who have eyes to see what an amazing world we inhabit. Wisdom enables us, whatever befalls us, however thrilling or dreadful, to make more and deeper sense of what we know of God in the light of it happening. When we see suffering, we know that God feels it

more than we do and cares more than we do and shares in it with us and shoulders the burden if we will let Him.

Truth is, that we comprehend circumstances in light of God rather than comprehend God in light of circumstances. [repeat]. It makes no sense to interpret the Almighty Mysterious God in light of our own limited perspective. Rather, wisdom cautions that we consider a situation and bring to life, remember, reincarnate the words of Jesus .

Wisdom grants us a Godly perspective

Wisdom came down to earth in the form of Jesus who declared he is truth. Putting our faith in him enables us to claim the promises of God for ourselves and all the world. In turn, this enables us to bear all kinds of circumstances when we have the understanding that God is ultimately the creator and sustainer of everything in heaven and on earth and under the earth

What is your lived experience of God?

How would you characterise some of the hallmarks of God based on your own experience of faith in Him? Can you recognise some of the following?

He makes sense in retrospect, reveals things at the last minute, resolves crises more thoroughly and far reaching than we could have imagined, when the chest tightens this can be the Holy Spirit at work, when we feel strangely peaceful, feel unusually warm when hands are laid upon us for healing prayer. Sometimes phrases are spoken to us from independent sources in quick succession, or appear from our reading.

If you have encountered these do share your experience with others. If you've never known God's presence in your life perhaps you would allow me to pray with you afterwards and if you're curious to know more about the Christian faith, we will be holding an enquirers course in the Autumn.

The sum is greater and more mysterious than the parts

There's a fable of some Indian jungle dwellers who were so fascinated by the beauty and terror of the indigenous tiger that they killed one and

dissected it in order to understand what made it so mysterious and wonderful yet terrifying and elusive. By taking something apart we lose what it is in totality. By trying to explain a mystery we destroy the qualities that make it such.

In my search for the best analogy for the Trinity, that is, God the Father Son and Holy Spirit I have been less and less inspired by the clever descriptions and properties of phenomena we experience in the world: properties of water, clover leaves, colours in a prism, or this one by CS Lewis

Stories...

reside in the imagination of the author, sit on the pages of a book and end up in the neural networks of the reader – the ideas and events exist in three different forms at the same time – same story, different existence. We make sense of the world by relating descriptions and explanations to the networks and synapses that we have already built up in our brains and make sense of the world.

However, analogies reduce a mystery to a simple construct and so devalue and deny the wonder. By contrast, what compels and enthrals me is hearing about your lived experience of encountering the living God.

Quarks are relational

Scientists probing the tiniest known elements of atoms have discovered some really weird properties. The smallest known things, *quarks*, apparently co-exist in more than one place at a time and have the ability to pass through walls. This discovery has no explanation as yet and it's more mystery than fact. The language that is being used to account for it is 'relational'. It's as though the universe has at its core relationality. Things are defined in relation to other things.

I'm only considered tall because mostly, except in Holland, people aren't as tall as me. You're only English-speaking because other people speak other languages. Our identity is bound up with our relationships, indeed we call family our relatives don't we?

Trinity Sunday STA May 22nd

All things are relative aren't they?

No – some things are absolute. I might think today is Monday but I'm wrong, (unless perhaps you're in Australia right now in which case it might be Monday by now). There are a few absolutes, and none greater than the truth that Jesus was in relationship with His Father and the Holy Spirit before the world began. Seeing the world through the prism of God's mission to a suffering world is wisdom that requires a lifetime to sink in.

Wisdom helps us see truth

Jesus is absolute truth by which we can make sense of the world. Wisdom helps us cope, gives us hope, faith and endurance.

Remarkably God invites you to participate in the conversation that Father Son and Holy Spirit have been engaged in before all time.

Our prayer for *N* today is that as she grows up learning the Wisdom of God through her relationship with Jesus, so she will understand and thrive in the knowledge that all of us are loved valued and known as adopted sons and daughters of the living relational God who is Father Son and Holy Spirit.

Amen