

SERMON: 21 March 2021 – Rev Alistair Cowper

We want to see Jesus

Jeremiah 31:31-34

John 12:20-33

Why?

Had the Greeks heard about him and wanted to see for themselves?

Did they want to test or taunt him?

Or worship him?

We don't know.

But it seems that this was a turning point for Jesus. This seemed to send a signal that his end was near. The whole world was beginning to go after him.

When I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw all people to myself.

John 12 is a turning point in the Gospel of John. The 7 I am statements and the 7 signs are over, the last being the raising of Lazarus from the dead in chapter 11, the straw that broke the camels back for the religious authorities. From then on, they were seriously out to get Jesus. There was no love on their part whatsoever. I don't want to be part of any religion like that.

That sort of thing makes me angry.

It's ok to be angry when things are wrong.

(Photo 1)

But Shane Claiborne reminded me this week that it's good to be angry at injustice but I need to remember to make my love even louder.

That kind of sums up the Gospel and the way of Jesus doesn't it?

Jeremiah said the day would come when the way of God would be in the mind and written on the heart. A new covenant where people would know God.

Jesus embodied that new covenant as the way of love.

So when I'm angry about the UK government decision to announce that on the one hand we will stop helping poor countries like Yemen and on the other we will spend billions on buying more nuclear weapons, I need to dig deep to find a loving way to channel that anger.

(Photo 2)

Remember that the C of S GA has, for the past 40 years, consistently condemned the holding of nuclear weapons.

(Photo 3)

And when I hear that politicians are telling us that the issue of nuclear weapons is not an issue for our democracy, oh I need to pull out all the stops to find a loving response.

In many ways, I wonder if this is what Jesus meant about this world making you suffer.

Hebrews 5 tells us that Jesus learned obedience through the things he suffered.

Jesus who when lifted up from the earth would begin to draw all people to himself in the way of love.

He's come to us and gone ahead of us. He's shown us the way of love. And now he prays for us that we might be drawn up into it in the power of the Spirit he has given us.

Let me end with a quote from Richard Rohr which came to me this week - via email

Christian life is a commitment to love, to give birth to God in one's own life and to become midwives of divinity in this evolving cosmos. *We are to be wholemakers of love in a world of change.*

This is why we need to switch our thinking from "Jesus came to fulfill us" to "we have come to fulfill Christ." We are a part of this ever-growing cosmic Christ that is coming to be in this one great big act of giving birth described in Romans 8:22.

[1] Richard Rohr, *Christ, Cosmology & Consciousness*, (Center for Action and Contemplation: 2010)

For we know that all creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. Romans 8:22

And so to return to the question we began with. Why do we want to see Jesus?

Because we want to see Christ as all and in all.