

SERMON: 31 January 2021 – Rev Alistair Cowper

LOVE BUILDS UP

1 Corinthians 8:1-13

Mark 1:21-28

Knowledge puffs up but love builds up (8)

Paul would rather go hungry than cause someone else to fall (13). He's not going to trip up the weak. He's not going to harm the poor in spirit. He's not going to claim he knows better than others - in fact he says in verse 2 if you claim to know it means you don't yet know!

He makes it clear that what matters is loving God and being known by God.

He's determined to try to model his Master, Jesus the Christ.

The Jesus who commands unclean spirits with a word; who exorcises demons and sets people free.

When the demons ask Jesus "what do you have to do with us Jesus of Nazareth" we might answer "everything". Because God in Jesus is showing us that everyone matters and he's after even the most despised, the most unclean, the most rejected; to cleanse every part of our sin ridden lives.

No wonder they called him a teacher unlike any other. He taught with the authority that was holy and good and he brings freedom to people bound by the cares and abuses of this world.

I meet so many people who have experienced trauma in life and what they need is love, compassion and acceptance as they are.

You would think that the church is the best place to receive such care but it's not always.

This week the FM apologised for transphobia and it reminded me of Dani, a trans man who I befriended in Stirling.

I first met Dani when he was Victoria about 7 years ago, aged 18, frightened, depressed, withdrawn.....

Dani's story.

I long for a church that longs for people like Dani to be loved and find compassion and acceptance, to have no judgement but simply to be loved as they are.

We often don't know the trauma people have experienced that has caused them to be presenting the way they are. But there's a greater chance of finding out if they are first loved fully and accepted totally for who they are.

Remember Paul's word that knowledge puffs up but love builds up.

That's the Jesus way.

May it be our way.