

## **Sermon**

### **Becoming Like Christ in Godliness; Isaiah 5 1-17; John 15 1-17**

I wonder what sort of week you had, I wonder if in your week it somehow reflected the Godliness of Jesus. Well let me begin by sharing how my week reflected the grace, humility and kindness that we are called to as Christians. And as you will see I am well qualified to talk on this subject.

#### **On Monday**

As I was driving into work, someone decided to cut me up in their car. I was running a bit late, Monday morning I'm not my usual my cheerful happy self. So feeling aggrieved I dropped a gear and I was determined to show the driver how I felt about this. Just up the road I was caught at the junction the person had managed to get out long before me. At the junction I was waiting very impatiently to get out. Then someone came along and kindly let me out, giving up their position, allowing me to take their place in the queue. I was then reminded that I was preaching a sermon on Godliness this weekend and resolved to be more Godly in my driving and not the wild man that had taken over all reason some minutes before.

#### **On Wednesday**

When I came home Wednesday I was faced with a very chaotic picture. This week we have decided to put in a new kitchen into our house. After ripping out the kitchen at the start of the week the novelty of not having a kitchen by Wednesday had definitely worn off. I got home to thick dust in the kitchen that had spread to the front room our main living room. The packs of kitchen cabinets were piled up in the front room and we had relocated the microwave the kettle and everything we needed to survive the ordeal. Against this Anna decided she wanted to play her latest Piano composition, Katie was sitting listening to the television blaring and I had one of my grumpy moments. Again I was reminded that I needed to write my sermon on reflecting Godliness in our lives.

#### **On Friday**

I think I might have got it right today. At my school every Friday throughout the winter months at our year 9 students in their catering lesson prepare a meal for 20 homeless people that are invited to Datchet Parish Church to stay the night in the church hall. This is organised by SHOC a lough homeless project in which churches in the area offer overnight shelter and food across the churches in the area. Friday night is the turn of Datchet School. The organisers were full of praise and saying what a great school we were, all the praise was being heaped on me. It was great I was feeling good about this one. Then I realised, it was the teacher that organised the food, the students that cooked the food, a member of staff delivered the food and all I did was take the praise. So again I was reminded about how much I need to be pruned.

#### **Joseph**

In our bible readings we heard how important it is to prune back the parts that do not bear fruit, that do not reflect God in our lives. In the old testament the great bible story in Genesis of Joseph and how his arrogance upset his brothers by standing up and saying that he was better than the rest

God had a plan and he also had work to do on Joseph, and through the many trials and tribulations that faced Joseph he was brought back into reconciliation with his brothers and the line of Israel was protected. And throughout Joseph's life you can see the way God developed his character through the challenges that he faced.

## **David**

David's story also a life story in the bible that shows how God works through us. The Psalms of David often tell a story of desperation, not knowing what to do or where to turn, running scared. His life also fell short of God's graces through his many shortcomings. God had work to do, and again as you read through the books of Samuel and psalms we can see God's pruning at work. Building his character from a young age, placing him in situations in which his courage, compassion and commitment are challenged to his very core.

## **The Kitchen**

So coming back to our new kitchen in Tomes household, the first job of putting a new kitchen in is to remove the old one. As the units were pulled out from the wall it became only too clear that there was a lot of cleaning up needed behind the cabinets. Hidden in behind the cabinets were years of grime and dirt that had collected in places that were impossible to get at without taking out the kitchen sink. The waste pipes needed replacing because of the accumulated, these areas that were not cleaned up needed some urgent attention. This reminded me again of today's bible readings.

The bible story uses metaphor to describe the way God develops us, whether it is pruning back the branches that do not bear fruit, or tending to the garden to not allow the weeds to overrun or perhaps the transformation of a kitchen that highlights areas of our lives that need to be cleaned up.

## **Bearing fruit: Acts of Kindness**

We can all grow branches that bear fruit, we can all make a difference to lives of others around us in the actions that we take and I would like to encourage all of us to think that at this time of year when we are coming out of the winter months into, when we come to a time of lent in which we all can take up the challenge of bearing new fruit. A lent programme that we have been involved with as school for a few years now has made a real difference to our school. The programme is called 40 acts and it provides a very practical way of demonstrating God's love in simple ways. You sign up to the website and each day they email you with a challenge – actually they give you a choice of 3 challenges, a 5 minute challenge a 15 minute challenge and a more extreme challenge. For example one day the theme is food, the bible verse sent is feeding the five thousand.

At my school on this particular day the PE teacher queued up for his lunch went to pay for his lunch and then said and I'm also paying for the two students behind me. Simple act of kindness that went along way and got the whole school talking about it. There is a fair trade chocolate day when we are challenged to hand out some chocolate to people.

## **Conclusion**

So to finish, there is always hope, there is opportunity for transformation, we can make a difference to other people, we are not always going to get it right but with God he can prune us, clean us up and give us the opportunity to show his love through practical acts of kindness.