

**Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> July 2019**  
**Trinity 6 (C)**

**Liverpool Parish Church**

**OT: Genesis 18.20-32**  
**NT: Colossians 2.6-15**  
**G: Luke 11.1-13**

On holiday this year I fulfilled a long-held ambition. I have been going to Red Wharf Bay on Anglesey for more than 50 years, but I've only gone to the one side where the pub and the houses are, a remnant of the community that used to welcome sailing ships bringing in their cargoes in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The bay is some 10 square miles and like Morecambe Bay, not one that you can safely walk across even at low tide.

This summer with the help of Emily and her intrepid driving up and down hills, round tight corners, all on single track roads, I got to the other side. The view was truly breath taking and presented such a different aspect that it was hard to believe it was the same place I know so well. The pub and the houses were dots in the distance and being nearer to the mouth of the bay, the open sea and the neighbouring coastal towns took on a greater significance.

Rather like the story that Fr Bill told us in his sermon last week, about the men who went to discover the moon but were overwhelmed by the sight of the Earth from such a distance, such a different perspective.

We think we know somewhere, someone, something until we take a different outlook.

The apostles and all the Jewish people knew God through the Law and the Prophets, the Old Testament God, the Creator who could appear as a God of authority and harsh justice, a God whose name could not be uttered, a God who could not be seen even by Moses.

To the people of the Old Testament, God appeared to be a power of fire and brimstone, demanding an eye for an eye, a God of revenge.

It was God himself that wanted to change humanity's perception of their Creator, to enable his people to see him as a God of mercy, a God of compassion, a God of love. And to do this, God changed his perception of humanity. No longer would he be just the Almighty God, he would be human too in the person of Jesus Christ. In order to save humankind, God was willing to undergo every human emotion and experience, with the exception of sin. He was even willing to undergo death.

It was through the person of Jesus, that the apostles came to see that it was possible to have a very different way of being with God. They were witnesses to Jesus' intimate relationship with God and they wanted to move from knowing the God of the Old Testament to the God of the New Testament, the God that Jesus preached about.

*"You have heard that it was said, "An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth." But I say to you, Do not resist an evildoer. But if anyone strikes you on the right cheek, turn the other also; and if anyone wants to sue you and take your coat, give your cloak as well; and if anyone forces you to go one mile, go also the second mile.*

Like me crossing the bay or the men going to the moon, the apostles realised that to perceive God differently they had to travel from one Testament to another, that they had to go on a journey and that Jesus was the Way. They saw too that prayer was at the heart of this transformation and so they asked Jesus how to pray.

And the first words he used must have stunned them.

Our Father.

Not Almighty God, not a God so powerful we can barely approach you.

No.

Our Father.

And suddenly they were on the other side, suddenly they were seeing the world and all people very differently. No longer slaves but children of a Heavenly Father.

Then comes a blessing, *Hallowed be your name.*

Followed by our mission, *Thy Kingdom come.*

And in that Kingdom, we will be sustained by the bread of heaven, our sins will be forgiven if we too forgive. And God will protect us from evil.

It was Atticus Finch in *To Kill a Mockingbird* who said "You never really understand a person until you consider things from his point of view....Until you climb into his skin and walk around in it."

God did this through Jesus and through Jesus, he calls each one of us to do the same.

If we want to enjoy the privilege of calling God our Father, then we must accept that all people are our brothers and sisters. And if we are to do our part to bring about the Kingdom of God, we must learn to see how other people perceive life, how other people are subject to different ways of being than we are, how all people are valid in the eyes of God no matter what our opinion of them may be.

I do not know what it is like to be subjected to racial prejudice. I do not know what it is like to be unable to read and write. I am a Christian and cannot remember a time in my life when I did not know and love Jesus. But these experiences or lack of them, cannot be an excuse for me not to try and see how life looks from across those particular bays for those who are black, or who have a learning disability or who have no faith.

Like the apostles, we too need Jesus, the Way, the Truth and the Life, to be able to make that journey to see life from a different perspective. The journey may be arduous like Welsh farm tracks or perilous like an expedition through space, but the rewards of the change of view will be life affirming, enabling us to obey the commandments of Jesus

*'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbour as yourself.'*

And then the Kingdom of God will be upon us. Amen.

The Revd Michelle Montrose