4th Sunday after Trinity (Year B)

I would like to begin this morning by asking you to try and complete the following statement in your head: "I need …". Try it. I'm sure that you will have come up with a multitude of answers. For example, I need more money, I need more sleep, I need relief from pain, I need recognition, (or maybe even I need to go to the toilet!)

It appears to me that most of us live with a mindset that continually imagines that we are somehow lacking in some way. We erroneously believe that when we find or achieve that illusive 'something', it will somehow make us feel more complete. That is probably why many of us spend our whole lives endlessly chasing such things and yet never really feel satisfied. But should this be the case? Is that all that life is about?

Today's reading from the Wisdom of Solomon 1:13-15, 2:23-24) offers a profound insight into the root cause of many of humanity's problems. There are similarities to the Genesis narrative where we read that in the beginning we were created in God's image, whole and complete and blessed by God. That is with all we could possibly need, with no sense of lack. It says: "Then God saw everything that he had made, and indeed it was very good". (Genesis 1:31).

This morning's reading from Wisdom likewise says that <u>everything</u> that God created is wholesome. God did not make death (Wisdom 1:13), but rather we were created in God's own image – that is eternal and incorruptible (1:23). To believe otherwise, is to believe in a lie. It was "through the devil's envy death entered the world and those who belong to his company experience it" (Wisdom 2:24).

I occasionally watch the TV series *'Would I lie to you?'* where two teams of celebrities have to share an apparently far-fetched story about themselves, whilst the opposition have to decide whether it's a truth or a lie. The yarns the that individual panel members spin are frequently outrageous but at the same time very plausible.

The lesson that those of us who watch learn is it is very easy to believe a lie. The bible identifies the devil as the father of all lies. Very often the little voice in our head whispers very plausible things that appear to us be the truth but are in fact utter lies. One of these is that lie that death is the end when the truth as we read in the passage from the Book of Wisdom begins is the exact opposite. It says, "God did <u>not</u> make death" (1:13) "for God created us for <u>incorruption</u>" (2:23). Each one of us are made in God's image, we are eternal spirits. To believe otherwise is to listen to the subtle but very convincing voice of the devil (2:23). The passage from Wisdom also says that all that God has created is wholesome and there is no destructive poison in them (2:23). Sickness and death were not part of the original order of things as created by God. It is only through listening to the devil's lies that the mental concept of that we are somehow separate from God arises.

Jesus came not only to show the world the face of God in human form but also to discredit the lies of the evil one believed by generations. In our passage from 2 Corinthians, Paul wrote: that though Jesus had all the eternal riches of heaven at his disposal, became poor, so that by his poverty <u>we</u> might become rich. (2 Corinthians 8:9). God is the eternal source of everything, and Jesus demonstrated that in his life.

In our Gospel, we have the account of two needy people who sought Jesus out for healing. First, we have the anonymous woman in the thronging crowds. She had spent all that she

had on seeking a cure for her haemorrhaging and in desperation reached out to touch the hem of Jesus' garment. On doing so, she was instantly healed. Note that Jesus said that it was her faith that had made her well. He sent her away whole again. Then, we read of Jairus's faith in Jesus that ultimately resulted his daughter being raised from death. Jesus rebuked the crowd for believing a lie: "The child is not dead but sleeping" (Mark 5:29). Because Jesus had come to proclaim that death and lack of wholeness is a lie - "I have come that you might have life, life abundantly". (John 10:10).

Yet still today many of us still seek to fulfil our so-called needs in the wrong places and in doing believe the devil's lies. Whereas the answer lies much, much closer than we think. It is to be found in the Spirit of God within us. Therein is to be found all the eternal resources of the heavenly realm. For God is the source of everything that is and likewise Jesus. Therefore, in Christ we have everything! However, the riches that we have in Christ are not for our own satisfaction, they are to be shared with others. As Paul makes clear to the Church in Corinth they were to excel in their generosity (2 Corinthians 8:7-15). It was a question of fair balance between their present abundance and the needs of others in the community.

Let us learn from today's lessons firstly that only in Christ can all our needs be met. As St Paul wrote: "And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus." (Phil 4:19). Secondly, that the abundance that God gives is not to be kept to ourselves but shared with those who lack, so let us receive generously and give generously! Amen.

Rev Andrew Jacobson 27th June 2021