**worshipping together while we are apart**

**Morning Prayer for Wednesday 7 October 2020**

**Readings**: Psalm 105, 1 John 1.1 – 2.14

Reflection

Today we begin a short five-week series on 1 John. This letter, unlike most New Testament letters, doesn’t tell us who the author is. It’s attributed to John, the brother of James, one of the inner circle of Jesus’ disciples but as with many things in the Bible, there is ongoing debate over the accuracy of this attribution. One of the reasons it is attributed to John is because there are many similarities to John’s Gospel. Though it comes towards the end of the Bible it is thought to be one of the earlier letters, written around 85-95AD. The letter is clear that it is written to Christians but it isn’t addressed to anyone specific, suggesting that it may have been sent to a number of different Christian communities.

Much of the letter addresses a common heresy at the time – Gnosticism. Gnostics believed that the body was wholly evil the spirit was entirely good. They taught that salvation was achieved by escape from the body through special knowledge, not through faith in Jesus Christ. The form of Gnosticism being addressed in this letter was taught by Cerinthus who claimed that the man Jesus was joined by the divine Jesus at his Baptism and the divine Jesus parted from the man Jesus before his death on the cross, questioning Jesus’ true humanity as other forms of Gnosticism did in different ways. Because they considered the body, and not the breaking of God’s law, was evil, they believed there were no consequences to breaking the law, leading to immoral behaviour.

1 John was written to expose this false teaching, to alert the Christians to their behaviour and its consequences and to assure them of salvation through Jesus Christ, the fully human, fully divine Son of God by sharing eyewitness testimony. The overarching theme of the letter is the unity of the church through God’s love as expressed in the person of Jesus Christ.

The opening passage (1-4) echoes the prologue to John’s Gospel but with a different emphasis. Right from the beginning of the letter, John is keen to assert the genuine humanity of Jesus by testifying to what he himself has seen, heard and touched. This man Jesus was his friend. By sharing what he has seen, heard and touched John is offering others the gift of friendship with Jesus, the fellowship with the Father, with Jesus Christ his son and with one another.

John moves on to talk about one of his favourite subjects, light and darkness. He lays out a series of contrasts:

* If we claim to be in fellowship with God but behave immorally we are not living in truth BUT if we walk in the light we have fellowship with one another and Jesus cleanses us from our sins.
* If we say we don’t sin, we are fooling ourselves and there is no truth in us BUT if we confess our sins, we will be forgiven.
* If we claim we haven’t sinned then we are calling Jesus a liar and his word is not in us.

The beginning of chapter 2 is full of reassurance. John is not writing to tick people off, he is writing to remind them that God’s forgiveness is certain through the risen Jesus Christ.

Next comes another contrast in the same form as those in chapter 1:

* If we say we know God but don’t follow his commands, the truth is not in us BUT if we obey God’s word, his love is made complete in us.

Jesus summed up the commandments as love for God and love for one another. For John this love has been revealed through Jesus’ life, death and resurrection, and should continue to be revealed through all believers. This was a challenge then and remains a challenge to us now. To ‘live as Jesus did’ (v6) means obeying his commands and following his example of obedience to God and loving service to others. Radical love for God and others is the key to walking in the light.

What is God saying to you through this passage this morning?

What does God want you to do about it?

**The Collect**

Heavenly Father,

at the Jordan you revealed Jesus as your Son:

may we recognise him as our Lord

and know ourselves to be your beloved children;

through Jesus Christ our Saviour. Amen.

**Prayers**

Including:

* Prayer for Roads in our parish – this week we are praying for London Road (east and west of the Village Hall).
* Those who are mourning for loved ones who have died.
* Teachers, parents and students.
* NHS workers, care workers and other key workers.
* People who are lonely or frightened.
* Those who are struggling financially or fear losing their jobs.
* Those delivering the vaccine for Covid-19.
* For the work of DENS in feeding the hungry and helping the homeless.
* Leaders of the nations of the world, for wisdom in their decision making.
* Leaders of all churches, including Archbishop Justin and our Bishops: Alan, Michael and Richard.
* For our Churchwardens and PCC.