

## Sermon Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> July 2022

### Genesis 1:15-21

### Colossians 3: 15 -24

I am going to start with a question; what type of society or relationship do you live in? The reading from Colossian's is all about relationships and I have to say my heart sank a little when I read about wives obeying husbands and husbands loving wives and then children obeying and thought preach on that without upsetting a lot of people or starting arguments.

To answer my own question, I would say in terms of relationship with Linda it is matriarchal; who do our children/grandchildren contact, who really makes decisions? I would like to say it is me but it isn't; we talk and discuss; however, our relationship is matriarchal and long may it continue.

However, the letter from Paul is so much more than earthly relationships; it goes much deeper into how we act as Christians in all we do, say and think and in my opinion our deep relationship with God.

The letter is telling us that we must live in peace '**VERSE 15 LET THE PEACE OF CHRIST RULE IN YOUR HEARTS.**' This doesn't mean that all arguments and differences will disappear but it teaches us as Christians we must work together even when there is silence or argument and show true Christian love and understanding in settling our differences and learn to live in true Christian relationships with all. This is what God wants you and me to do and I repeat in everything we do, say and think. But it goes much deeper into our relationship with God.

Another question. Do you have God at the centre of your life? To live as a Christian your relationship with God is the most important; do you turn to God when things go wrong or forget to thank Him when things go well? I suspect many of us do and if we do it must be addressed as Paul is telling the Colossians and as he writes in verse 17 '**AND WHATEVER YOU DO WHETHER IN WORD OR DEED, DO IT ALL IN THE NAME OF LORD JESUS, GIVING THANKS TO GOD THROUGH HIM.**' Our relationship with God and His Son Jesus

Christ is paramount and by having this we truly live Christian lives and I repeat in all we do, say and think.

If we are to be an inside out Church this is what we must all do, not just in Church, but in our lives in the world by showing and telling people we are Christians and acting accordingly. Far too often we hear 'he says he is a Christian but Christians don't act like that.' My answer to that is to turn it round and say I am a Christian and I am trying to show God's love in all I do and say; effect, sometimes it works, sometimes it provokes discussion or nothing. I suspect that people cannot or don't want to have or understand a relationship with God and how it can and will change their life. That does not mean we give up, do it all in the name of Jesus Christ, to quote Paul.

Paul then refers to slaves. This was not just the Romans, they inherited it from the Greeks; many families, including Christian and Jewish families had slaves and if the household was Christian the slaves would be Christian as they followed their masters, in whatever they do, to quote from verse 17. **Look at verses 23 – 24. WHATEVER YOU DO, WORK AT IT WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AS WORKING FOR THE LORD, NOT FOR MEN. SINCE YOU KNOW THAT YOU WILL RECEIVE AN INHERITANCE FROM THE LORD AS A REWARD. IT IS THE LORD CHRIST YOU ARE SERVING.'**

Slavery still exists today in our country and in my time as a lawyer I came across this when dealing with a very large house in Kensington. It was reported and the police dealt with it, freeing the people and prosecuting. We must all be aware of slavery and report our suspicions to the authorities. However, what is Paul telling us in the context of slaves? In all we do, say and think, yes, those words again, whatever we do, Paul is encouraging us to see a new way of seeing that all our daily tasks matter. Many Christians and the Church in general have a sense of their own importance and feel what they do is important. We cannot live with a secular/sacred or Church divide. This is what Paul is telling us; to believe in God and follow Jesus Christ in our lives and actions.

Mention of slaves and how they should behave made me think that my relationship with God the MASTER has to be like that of a slave. To do as God wants me to do, say or think means for me I must have God the master at the very centre of my life.

The words 'whatever you do' figure in the letter from Paul more than once. Therefore, whatever you do hold God and His Son Jesus Christ at the centre of all you do, say and think in good times and bad times. Why because God and not the changing secular world is always there for you and me.

Please come and talk to me if my sermon has raised issues for you because this letter from Paul is hard hitting with so many contexts in our own lives. Amen.