



From the Vicarage

'When God saw what they did, how they turned from their evil ways, God changed his mind about the calamity that he had said he would bring upon them; and he did not do it. But this was very displeasing to Jonah, and he became angry.'

Jonah 3.10-4.1

This week the government has made a number of choices in response to the ongoing pandemic. Some people are having to unexpectedly self isolate following a holiday abroad to a destination which is suddenly added to the quarantine list; others are facing tough choices over who they can see (or not) from Monday, given the new 'rule of six'. Restrictions understandably give rise to thoughts that 'it's not fair!'

'It's not fair' may well have been words used by Jonah following his exit from the whale and his return to Nineveh. After a call to repentance, it's citizens repented and God spared them. Good news! Jonah though was angry and has a bit of a moan at God. 'It's not fair'. He would rather die he says than acknowledge that God has spared those in Nineveh, these enemies of the people of Israel.

God asks Jonah a searching question: 'Is it right for you to be angry? I wonder if Jonah is a mirror onto humanity for us, showing us our tendency to define and limit God's goodness, grace and generosity? It is human nature for us to dwell on what we may have missed out on, and on what others have that we don't have. These can be the kind of things that we grumble and moan about. They can harden our hearts to any generosity that may be shown to us. Are we grateful for what we have or do we grumble at what we do not. If so perhaps we should imagine ourselves, not in Jonah's position, but perhaps as one of the saved people of Nineveh spared by God. We consider ourselves to be limited in these times. But God's generosity is without limit, measure or calculation. 'It's not fair' we might cry. But then fairness isn't enough for God. May we become more aware each day of the God who offers each of us his limitless, overflowing, all-inclusive generosity.

Worship this week:

Holy Communion @ 9.00 a.m.

This will be a said service for the benefice at St Marys lasting for approximately 30 minutes.

Sunday Worship @ 10.00 a.m.

For Sunday Worship the link is:

<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/72337650077?pwd=bCtnbU4rWGdmRW45UUEvSms2UmRRUT09> (Meeting ID: 723 3765 0077 Password: 0Wg7Kw)

You are invited to rejoin or join for virtual coffee after the service.

Alternative worship on Sunday

The Church of England's online service this week is from All Saints Kings Heath, in south Birmingham. Reflecting on the theme of forgiveness, the service includes contributions from Professor Nicola Slee, poet and theologian. The link is here: <https://youtu.be/VJRtVwucldc>

Sunday Worship on BBC Radio 4 is at 8.10 a.m. Four hundred years ago this week, a small ship set sail from Plymouth to the New World. Its passengers were in search of a better life. Some were seeking religious freedom, others a fresh start in a different land. The Right Reverend Nick McKinnel, Bishop of Plymouth, reflects on the story of the Mayflower and the significance of this voyage for today's world. The link is here:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m000ml9q>

Compline - Friday @ 8.00 p.m.

For Compline this week use this link:

<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/73672170367?pwd=QnVKWTRpR3g5VWk0WUtCQ3hhNFRkQT09> (Meeting ID: 736 7217 0367 Password: 7YC29t)

Sundays in September

The following services are planned:

6 Sept	Holy Communion @ 9.00 a.m.	St Andrews
	Online (Zoom) @ 10.00 a.m.	
13 Sept	Holy Communion @ 9.00 a.m.	St Marys
	Online (Zoom) @ 10.00 a.m.	
20 Sept	Holy Communion @ 9.00 a.m.	St Andrews
	Online (Zoom) @ 10.00 a.m.	
27 Sept	Holy Communion @ 9.00 a.m.	St Marys
	Online (Zoom) @ 10.00 a.m.	

May the Lord bless and keep you all.

Shaun

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