

14th August 2022

What a Wonderful World

Revd Geoff Gleed

A sermon for a baptism

You don't need me to tell you we live in a hurting, troubled, frightening, confusing and divided world, and I guess a number of us can spend a fair bit of time thinking about that the future holds for us and for our loved ones.

Well, this morning for just a few minutes I want to put such thoughts and feelings aside and instead focus on those things that give us pleasure and for a time simply dwell in the moment, giving thanks for all that's good and great and beautiful and uplifts us - dare I suggest that there's no reason to feel guilty about that because we need to take 'time out' from the worries and woes of the world... that way we might be enabled to cope and be reinvigorated to face the challenges of life.

We can do that by simply stopping and listening and loving and sharing together the so many things around us that can change our perspective... we need to take time in our busy lives. Just take in what this poem is saying:

Words to Live By

Have you ever watched kids
on a merry-go-round?
Or listened to the rain
slapping on the ground

Do you run through each day on the fly?
When you ask folk "How are you?"
Do you hear the reply?

When the day is done
do you lie in your bed
With the next hundred chores
running through your head?

Ever told your child
We'll do it tomorrow?
And in your haste, not seen their sorrow?

Ever lost touch,
Let a good friendship die
'Cos you never had time
to call and say "Hi"?

When you run so fast
to get somewhere,
You miss half the fun of getting there.

When you worry and hurry
through your day
it is like an unopened gift
being just thrown away.

Life is not a race
Do take it slower.
Hear the music
before the song is over.

David L Weatherford

I can see exactly how I fit those words because there are times when I tend to take the good things in my life and in this world very much for granted - when I am so busy "doing" I miss the moment. But to be fair, there are times in my life when I am struck by the awesome beauty of a

rainbow or a field of buttercups, a wooded glade festooned with bluebells. Equally I have to admit that there are times when I take people for granted - especially my nearest and dearest.

Do you get those feelings too?

Well I suggest that they are perfectly natural - it is all part of what makes us human. Of course there are particular events in our lives which can cause us to want to give thanks and one of those - a real high point in most people's lives - is the birth of a child. We know that such a gift is not always possible for some, but to those who have rejoiced in the birth of a son or daughter, there can be little I guess that would rank above it.

Today we have shared in the privilege of Amelie's baptism - signifying a new birth into the faith of Jesus and into the life of the church community and of course into her family.. promises have been made by parents, god parents and all of us here to show Amelie the love expressed through the life of Jesus and to help her grow in faith throughout her life. We have committed ourselves whenever it is possible and appropriate to ensure Amelie is going to be encouraged to learn about the Christian life; and of course we would all be ready in our own way, I'm sure, to offer the care and compassion, the love and support not only to Amelie but to Kate and Marcus, their family, god-parents and friends whenever we can.

Now when we met a while back, Kate and Marcus, you suggested we might include the hymn "For the Beauty of the Earth" in our service today, in the version by John Rutter that however would be beyond even our talented congregation here at Immanuel but we have included the hymn and as a 'nod' to John Rutter the choir has performed another of his anthems "Look at the World". Rutter wrote both words and music - and I shall end this address by reading those words that the choir has just sung.

As I said we really do live in a hurting, troubled and divided world where people are suffering, where there are wars and conflict and so much devastation and destruction, but just for now let us think good thoughts, remember good times and share that goodness which is still present in so many people performing great acts of kindness albeit in small ways.. Let us refresh ourselves with the knowledge that God is good and surrounds us with beauty and wonderful opportunities to give thanks. Our Bible reading and the music of our service today has centred around the glory of creation at its best so we need to hold on to everything that shouts "YES!" For hope of a changing world where love and peace and joy and laughter spell out an end to so much that prevents growth.

But how do we begin to achieve this?well it is already there...as I said just then...in people doing good things.

It is there in nature at its best too. showing us the potential Beauty and resources of our planet if we only use them wisely.

Yes of course we know about earthquakes, fires, wars and global warming and are constantly reminded of the economic situation of our country. There are indeed grave concerns for the future unless we tackle these issues but we need to leave a lasting legacy - legacy for Amelie and the

generations to come and for which we pray they may thank us. But we need to take time out from all these woes in order to regain our sanity and sense of proportion so that we can see the positive outcomes for ourselves and our world.

Jesus did this throughout his life and ministry - he took himself away from the hustle and bustle and pressure of life in order to recharge and be ready to face the challenges ahead. . Surely if it is good enough for Jesus, it must be good enough for you and me!.

I've said enough, as promised here are those words of John Rutter that the choir sang a few moments ago...he asks us to look at the world through fresh eyes

Look at the World, everything all around us
Look at the world and marvel every day,
Look at the world, so many joys and wonders,
So many miracles along our way

Look at the earth, bringing forth fruit and flower
Look at the sky, the sunshine and the rain,
Look at the hills, look at the trees and mountains
Valley and flowing river, field and plain.

Think of the spring, think of the warmth of summer
Bringing the harvest before the winter's cold
Everything grows, everything has a season
Til it is gathered to the Father's fold

Every good gift, all that we need and cherish
Comes from the Lord in token of his love
We are his hands, stewards of all his bounty
His is the earth and his the heavens above

Praise to Thee, for all Creation - give us thankful hearts that we might see.
All the gifts we share, and every blessing - all things come from Thee.

Well friends I leave you to stay calm, stay cool and have faith enough to believe that our world, our planet can be changed for the better and I ask that you become a part of that change yourself.

So may God bless us each one, for just like little Amelie, we too are part of his Creation
Amen