

Notes on Ephesians 3 : 1 – 4, Mark 9 : 2 – 11
‘In Jesus, I can see clearly now.’ 12th April 2026

Last Sunday we witnessed the joy of seeing Molly and James being baptised as well as having an Easter egg fight; did anyone else have an egg fight? This is my new favourite image, and act, to define and describe all that Paul is speaking about when he uses the language of ‘mystery’ in relation to the cross and resurrection of Jesus. Paul here is urging us to go big, but we do not always do so. For example, John Stott in his book ‘The Cross of Christ’, insists that the cross and resurrection are primarily and fundamentally about the idea of sacrifice, of Jesus dying in my place. Now, this is something incredible and amazing but to say that it is the primary way the Bible speaks about the cross and resurrection is to shrink this awesome mystery because the New Testament is equally convinced that it is about the demonstration of the love of God, the victory of God, the ransom paid for us, the Exodus into the freedom from the slavery to sin and death and of the new life we have in Jesus. Paul here in chapter 3 urges us all to see clearly now about all that Jesus has done for us, or in other words, to keep it big!!

I saw a video this week which asked what I thought might be London’s most valuable asset. The video suggested that it was the forever rights to Peter Pan, written and given by JM Barrie, to fund the work of the Great Ormond Street Hospital for children. In 1988 these royalties became protected by an Act of Parliament but in 2014 the Disney Corporation challenged it even though they had already made more than £50 million from Peter Pan. However, all that Disney gained from this challenge, which they lost, was for people to see clearly now just how greedy they were. Paul longs for us to see clearly what Jesus’ death and resurrection is about and he uses the language of mystery to teach us that our God is a God of the unexpected, of awe and wonder. God’s unexpected move was not about the triumph of Grace over Law or Faith over Deeds, but the far greater act of new creation. This new creation is seen clearest in the new creation community we call ‘the church’. This is the heart of Paul’s message as the Apostle to the Gentiles which he has described in Ephesians chapter 1 and 2. Now in chapter 3 he focuses further on how this new creation community, that is this church, is to live in the light of this. He speaks of this in three ways:

Firstly, we are to fathom what motivates, inspires and energises Paul to be an Apostle which he describes here in verses 1 and 2. Paul describes his own journey of ‘seeing clearly now’ from being Saul the Pharisee who persecuted the church, to being Paul the Apostle who knows he is called to build the new Israel. Paul lives out his own journey of his coming to know who Jesus is, why he died and was raised and what new creation now looks like. He sees how Jesus’ death and resurrection has completely reworked Israel’s hope which the church is now called to live in. This is why I chose ‘The Day is Yours’ as our Lent read for this year. It was meant to encourage and stimulate how we think of our lives day by day, to see clearly now why this day and everyday belongs to Jesus. I appreciate that it was not everyone’s cup of tea, but this was what I aspired to and I am saddened that it didn’t work out same way for you.

Secondly, Paul knew he was called to build community rooted not in similarity but in dissimilarity. The church is to live as a sign of new creation to a tribalized and

divided society and world and how they can live in unity. This was not by removing or papering over the vast differences which existed between them, but by embracing them in Jesus. This was the way in which people would know the truth of the Good News of Jesus' death and resurrection. This would be how people would see what an identity rooted in Jesus looked like. This would be how the presence of the Holy Spirit would be seen in and among them. This would be how they would shine as light in the world of work, rest and play which assumed that Jesus had no place there. This would be how they would live as a people of prayer. This would be how they would fight the spiritual war standing shoulder to shoulder, side by side. This is how we are to live too.

Thirdly, we are to see clearly now because Jesus speaks to us in moments of revelation. Like the time when Jesus spoke to Paul on that road to Damascus and turned his life completely upside down. Like the time when he set aside Paul to be his Apostle to the Gentiles to fulfil his promise to Abraham. Like the times when he guided and led Paul along the way, even to his dying a martyr's death in Rome. I have known such times myself like at Greenbelt when I became a Christian in 1980, when I knew I was called to ministry when at Portsmouth Poly, the many occasions when I was at Spurgeon's College, the times when I followed his call to three different churches and the shape of ministry Jesus has called me to live out. I have heard Jesus speak to me through people like Tom Wright, Walter Brueggemann, Eugene Peterson and through so many people in the three churches I have had the privilege to minister. But, and this is the good news, this is not something reserved for Apostles or Revs, it is something we are all to ask for, to pray for and to know in our lives too.

This is why I included Mark 9 and the story of the Transfiguration for today. The story is about God speaking to you, telling you that Jesus is his beloved Son, who we have seen bloodied on the cross and raised to new life, and that we are all to listen to him. We are all to have moments of profound lifechanging encounter with our God as described in last week's Old Testament readings from the Song of Solomon. This love poem describes the power of love awakening, of our being cherished and our response to adore our God in return. This was the heart of our Lent course where we listened to and talked about the art of Lectio Divina that we may come to understand more and more in our hearts, our minds and our soul the mystery of Christ as described in verse 4. Do you see clearly now? Jesus yearns for us all to see clearly now that we may all know his love deeper in our lives, that our lives may be lived deeper in this love and that through the life, ministry and mission of this church, so many more may come to see Jesus clearer too.