

Reflections for 25th October 2020 - Bible Sunday

A Time to Build

This year our Old Testament reading for Bible Sunday is from the book which tells the story of Nehemiah, a Hebrew man who lived in exile in Persia. He felt God's call to go back and restore the life of his homeland, and eventually he was given permission to go back. Despite many obstacles and setbacks, he organised and encouraged the people to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem – which they did, in just 52 days.

Then they did something about rebuilding their faith, and their spiritual lives. The people asked to have the scriptures, the book of the Law, read to them, so that they could hear anew and understand the way that God called them to live.

And when the people heard the Law, they wept, because they had not known God's will and purpose for them. But their teachers told them not to grieve, but to celebrate, because now they had heard and understood God's word:

Do not grieve, for the joy of the Lord is your strength. (v. 10)

They were told to celebrate, to enjoy good food and drink, and share it, so that everybody was included. And then to change their way of life, to live according to the word of God – according to God's will and purpose for them.

This story can raise important questions for us and for our lives:

where our lives are rooted and grounded?

what are the foundations that we are building our lives on?

This week's New Testament reading includes these words of encouragement:

Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly ...

On Bible Sunday, we are encouraged to make time and space to hear the word of God anew, to let it dwell richly within us and among us, and to let the word of God – God's will and purpose for us – shape the way that we live.

Revd John Waller

Almighty God,
we thank you for the gift of your holy word.
May it be a lantern to our feet,
a light upon our paths,
and a strength to our lives,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Bible readings: Nehemiah 8. 1-4a, 8-12; Colossians 3. 12-17; Matthew 24. 30-35

Story: 'A Time to Build' (based on the book of Nehemiah)