

TFTD : MONDAY 1 JUNE 2020 : HAYLEY MATTHEWS : ALL HALLOWS

EXODUS 34:1-10; LUKE 4:1-13

We have a strange pair of readings today, for first we are reminded of the Ten Commandments being given to God's people as a sign of His covenant relationship with them and then we zip into Luke's gospel to be reminded of Jesus' temptation in the wilderness, where he spent forty days and forty nights. Why would we be thinking about this during the forty days of Easter, I wonder?

I think there are always three questions we should be asking ourselves, and these scriptures cover them perfectly; first, where have we come from; second, where are we now; third; where are we going to. Unless we ask ourselves these three questions in order at regular intervals in our Christian lives we risk stagnation, or, worse still, losing our ability to hear God's voice calling us in new directions. That is why it is so important to be reminded, in the lead up to Pentecost, that we have come from a covenant relationship in which God's foundational, and unchanging commandments hold us fast no matter what it going on around us. We could think of the current pandemic as a wilderness experience – to what should we cling if not to our relationship with God and the rules of engagement that he has set in stone: thou shalt love thy neighbour, to name but one. To have this set in stone reminds us that our relationship with God is not easily cast aside; rather God's ways provide a strong and stable resting place from which we can face whatever comes our way.

Even Jesus, when faced with temptation, returned to the ten commandments, to God's word and God's ways. How many of our nation are doing just that at this unprecedented time of online Christendom?

So where are we now? I cannot speak for any of you and between us the range of emotions, temptations, trials and tribulations will be huge, not to mention the slower or faster pace of life; the lack of space or unutterable loneliness. Whatever we are faced with, this is time to take stock and to line up our values, behaviours and what we usually spend our lives doing against God's call deep down in our hearts.

Finally, Jesus is thinking only of what he is called to do and where he is going even in the midst of His wilderness experience and this too is another way he is able to hold fast to God's commandments. He is not going to risk losing it all for some fleeting moment that will undo the great gift He is to be to us all. I wonder, what is the great gift you have to offer, and where is it now? Stand on God's promises and release it like a dove from your opening hands – we need it, we need you, now more than ever.

- Let's sit quietly and remember where we have come from and where God's promises have brought us.
- Let's think about where we are now. Be honest, nobody is listening and God already knows.
- Listen to God and hear what the Spirit says to you about where you are being taken and why. Which of God's words are going to be the rock beneath your feet?
- Let's pray for all who feel they are lost in the wilderness, with or without God. May they be brought into divine relationship and into the new future that God promises each one of us.

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