

Pastoral Letter – October 2020

From The Rev'd Alex Jeewan

Dear friends

If we can agree on anything, then surely it must be that this has been a year of new challenges, the like of which we have never experienced before. Things have not returned to any sense of normality and the future is still rather uncertain. This has affected, of course, both the Church and wider society as a whole.



I would definitely say the biggest personal new challenge that has come to me and my family is my eldest son leaving home for university. This is the first time I have experienced a child leaving home and it has left me with mixed emotions. A mixture of excitement for my son, anxiety that he will be happy and sadness that he is not living with us.

I am reminded of the parable of the prodigal son. In the story, a father has two sons. The younger son asks for inheritance from his father, who freely grants his son's request. This son, however, is wasteful and extravagant, squandering his fortune and eventually becoming destitute. As a consequence, he now must return home empty-handed and intend to beg his father to accept him back as a servant. To the son's surprise, he is not scorned by his father but is welcomed back with celebration and a welcoming party. Envious, the older son refuses to participate in the festivities. The father tells the older son: 'Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. But we had to celebrate and rejoice, because this brother of yours was dead and has come to life...'

Possibly, having two sons provides me with a sense of empathy, although I am not suggesting for a moment that either of my sons will squander their inheritance or be jealous of the other! However, I am reminded of God's unrelenting love for each and every one of us.

God loves us like any good parent does and has also demonstrated what sort of parents we should be. God allows us, his children, to make decisions for ourselves, to go our own way and He does not coerce us to love him. Whatever way we choose, he always welcomes us back with loving arms. Another important lesson, however, is learnt from the elder brother.

This brother thinks that he needs to earn the father's love. He has worked hard all his life and has stood by his father, yet his younger brother treats his father badly, takes him for granted and yet is welcomed with open arms.

The same Father who loves the younger son, despite his flaws and sought him out when he was lost, also seeks us out. Just as He left the party long ago to meet his older son, He still leaves the banquet table, the dancing and the partying, and meets US, where we are, with that same, gentle invitation, 'Come to the feast.'

So, finally, as new challenges come forth, we must remember that we are all worthy of God's love and no one is exempt. So in our darkest days we are always welcomed, loved and all called to join in the celebration of being part of the fellowship of God, bought by the precious

blood of our saviour Jesus Christ.

With love,

Alex.

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