

Weekly Bible Study for Highcliffe and Bransgore Methodist Churches

Bible Study w/c 21st June 2020 by Liz Ward

Galatians 3 v 26 - 4 v 7

I have never been fortunate enough to have inherited property or a valuable heirloom. The only things we have passed down in the family are a painting from a Great Uncle and a carving called Joe - the top of a walking stick my Father brought back from Sierra Leone after the war (only the top because he had to cut it to fit in his rucksack).

However, I have inherited other things from my family, love and understanding from my parents, values, memories, enjoyment of nature, to name but a few.

The reading is about inheritance, and, as so often, has clear messages for today's society.

Ch 3 v 28 is particularly relevant at the moment as we have many in our society from different ethnic backgrounds feeling that they are less valued, less likely to be considered for certain jobs, more likely to be stopped by police or treated in a disrespectful way. It is true that there are many groups in our society which suffer from discrimination because of their colour, gender, appearance, disability, etc. V 28 clearly states that we should treat all fellow Christians equally, no discrimination. But, should we not consider that as a maxim, whatever the faith (or no faith) of the other person? If we are 'clothed in Christ' then should we not try to see others as Christ does. Not judging by colour of skin, physical appearance, gender, intelligence, accent or background.

Ch 4 v 3 clearly describes our difficulties with many issues, including those of equality. We are human and influenced, governed, by our natural instincts, jealousy, greed, envy, wanting to be 'top dog', being judgemental, selfishness. However, the reading demonstrates that we can overcome these instincts, no longer need to be enslaved to them. We are freed from these by the death of Jesus and we inherit the promised Holy Spirit, who guides and encourages us to live the Jesus way and to see people as He does.

1. The recent 'Black Lives Matter' campaign reminds us that some in society are discriminated against. How do you think the church should respond to this movement?
2. What other groups do you think are discriminated against?
3. Do you think the church operates according to v 28? If not, how can you encourage change?
4. If we are honest, we all have prejudices. Think for a moment about yours - be honest with yourself. Pray for God to remove them from you and ask Him to change your attitude.
5. What else do you think you may still be a slave to? Place it before God and ask Him to show you how to be free from it.
6. What do you feel is your inheritance from God? You might like to share that with another person.