



Reflections and thoughts for this Sundays Reading from the Vicar

As I look at this Sundays Reading for Mothering Sunday I rejoiced at the message of strength that we can draw from it. All our readings are familiar as they are often used on Mothering Sunday.

We start with the birth of Moses in a troubled world where his very life was forfeit before he was born, but through the courage and determination of his mother in the face of such adversity, and through her faith in God she cast him on the water in a basket. A vessel that while well made could not be home for long. It was a stranger who took pity on that baby. The daughter of Pharaoh an unlikely hero in the narrative of brutality and infanticide that was taking place at that time. But it was this lady who showed love and compassion in a dark time for the Hebrew people.

It is another stranger or bit part character that walks into the Gospel reading. Simeon was in the Temple at the time of Jesus being presented as a baby. He delivers a speech, that to start with amazed Jesus parent and then was to disturb them. From Simeon was the harsh truth of parental love which is both joy and sorrow.

Here we find a mother and father, Mary and Joseph who have both risked much in terms of being outcast, and accepted through faith the responsibility of being parents to God's Son Jesus. Think of Marys response to the Angel; *'Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.'* (Luke 1:38) And Josephs response to the Angel: *When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife'* (Matthew 1:24)

They both respond in faith and love to the call by God to be his servants, and whilst they might have expected from such a start that things might be different they would not have expected the words of Simeon, that a mothers heart would know the ache of deep pain and sorrow. But such news didn't deter them, they went quietly home and Jesus grew, and the favour of God was on him.

Our reading from Paul is a message to both the Church in Colossus and to us now about how we are to live our life as those called by God into a loving relationship with him. A relationship that we have responded to by abiding (living or making our home) in his love. God loves all, but we have chosen to respond. It is a message that is for today, for this time in which we find ourselves, *'clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience... but above all clothe yourself in love...'* (Colossians 3.12f)

Perhaps for those of us who now find ourselves distanced from close and often local family, or find ourselves spending more time in the company of one person, or working out how to live and work with young children demanding attention, Pauls words to what was a new church working out how it was to be church, much as we are, *was 'Bear with one another and if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord forgave you...'*

This small part of Pauls letter gives us plenty to guide us in our new ways of being church. We might not be able to join together in our familiar public worship, bible study and prayer groups, but with a bit of imagination we may find ways to do all that we did. We can still, *with gratitude in our hearts sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs to God.* And as Paul concludes *'whatever you do in word and deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.'* Amen.