

## TUESDAY COMMUNION

"The Faith that brings us Peace"

Hymn: 730 I hunger and I thirst

Reading: Romans 4. 23 – 5. 5

Our reading begins as Paul comes to the end of retelling the story of how Abraham trusted God, had faith in his promises. At this time Abraham was still uncircumcised and therefore lived before the time when the Jewish people were separate and distinct.

He represented every person. Paul understands what the Bible says as this:

“Abraham’s faith, not anything he had done nor anything to do with being a member of a particular religious group put him in a right relationship with God.

In other words, he was “justified by faith” and not by anything he did or by anything he was!

Rarely does “therefore” strike us with such force but here it is the join between God’s attitude to Abraham and God’s attitude to us. Just as Abraham was accepted by God and brought into a right relationship with him because of his faith so the same applies to everyone, Jew or Gentile, who trusts in God.....

What is more, says Paul, faith leads us to enjoy peace with God. Time and again people tell me they feel angry with God and sometimes I feel that way myself! It’s the child in us wanting someone to blame for all that we feel is unfair in life, all that frustrates us, disappoints us, hurts us.

We want someone to blame and like sulky teenagers we turn on the one who we call “Father” or “Mother”. After all, do we not say that this is his world? Do we not speak of him, giving us life?

Why won’t he let us have everything we want?

Why do we sometimes have to live with God’s judgement on the way we want to live and accept the consequences for our mistakes and folly?

Paul is saying to us, perhaps as occasionally a good friend can say to a teenager who’s constantly moaning about the failure of his parents, God isn’t against you but on your side.

Yes, life can be hard and it isn’t always fair (and Christians need to think hard as to why the world is the way it is) but God is on your side and he desires your good!

- He doesn’t want you to be on the outside, resentful and angry, feeling hard done by and looking for someone to blame.
- He doesn’t want you to see him as a spoil-sport or as one who is always condemning you.

He is the God whose true character is seen in the “Lord Jesus Christ”.

He is the God who reaches out to you in love, who comes so that you may know him and live constantly in his presence.

Paul says that through Jesus **“we have obtained access to this grace in which we now stand.”**

It is as though Jesus brings us with him into the presence of God. We don't have to wait a month as though we were hoping to see our medical consultant. By “faith” we have immediate access to the God who is always keenly waiting for us to come to him.

It doesn't make life easy but no longer do we feel we are constantly engaged in a battle against God or just raging at the darkness!

Life may involve suffering but there is the possibility that the difficulties and challenges of life may produce in us the characteristics of the mature person: endurance, hope and love.

The love of God that we experience as we begin to trust in him, transforms our lives. Through faith, his love enables us to love.

**First**, he enables us to love God for who he truly is as the “Father” and “Mother” who desires only our good.

**Secondly**, in ourselves, he enables us to begin to love more widely, more deeply and more generously.

So, in faith we open ourselves to the love of God as we receive our communion today, asking that his love may be poured afresh into our hearts and we may living as his loving daughters and sons.

Amen.