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Jeremiah 11.18-20 St Peter de Beauvoir
19.September.2021

It's all about Jesus

*May the words of my mouth & the meditation of all our hearts be acceptable
in your sight, O Lord my rock and my redeemer. Ps19.14*

I'd like this morning to speak about Jesus

After all we're in church together and if you can't speak about Jesus in church it's unlikely you'll speak about him anywhere else

I blame Jeremiah - he prompted me to speak about Jesus. His words & pics in the rdg this morning point me to Jesus. Jeremiah ministered in Judah as a Prophet/Priest 626-586BC he probably overlapped with Habakuk and Ezekiel Jewish tradition holds that he was put to death by stoning... It was a difficult time and nations jostled for power and Judah was overthrown -Jeremiah pointing to their own mistakes as a nation he buried his clothes and dug them up -'Your faith is like that he said it was once clean and pure but now it is moldy maggoty and ragged' You've focussed on the external forms of your religion rather than turning your inner life of passion to God

Jeremiah was the Prophet of the Inner Life... and his words, and his life pointed to Jesus... his very name meant 'The Lord exalts, establishes' and throws his messengers into action in a hostile world. Jeremiah and Jesus both exalted established and thrown into action in a hostile world Chapter 11 we read him say "I was like a gentle lamb led to the slaughter, you will destroy the tree with its fruit so that his name will no longer be remembered"

Jeremiah and Jesus like lambs to the slaughter
Jeremiah and Jesus both fruitful yet cut down
But one of them would be raised from the dead and his

name would be remembered and revered by millions.
Jeremiah might have been calling Judah to see the error of their ways and their need to listen to God's word - he was also pointing to a future Messiah that many would also ignore and ultimately put to death...

Jeremiah points me to JESUS and if Jeremiah is speaking about Jesus then I think we should speak about Jesus too

I've loved coming to St Peters during your vacancy and I hope to be here the night Simon is installed as your vicar
Some of you know that Vicars come and Vicars go but one thing remains central to the church and that is it's head the person of Jesus

I first met Jesus when I was 19

my sister became a Christian a year before me
my parents would become Christians a year after me
the first person to introduce me to Jesus was a man called peanuts well actually he was called Martin but we all called him peanuts he and I were scouts together on a one particular night on a scavenger hunt around the town where we had to find out from the top house what a price of beer was I know you're wondering it was 32p Peanuts and I we're waiting for the rest of our team and he said to me ***Andy I'd love you to know Jesus*** I was a little bit shocked to tell you the truth but God was in the scout promise back then so it wasn't as though I didn't know who God was but I certainly didn't know Jesus personally!

>Peanuts words stayed with me for a long time
So did Paula Baker at school who wore a badge Jesus loves you and so I wore one that said "So will I for a quid"

when I was 19 I met Jesus himself

I'd was sacked from work for a possible theft & drove to

Essex - our local scout group camping - volunteer as a canoe instructor and met another volunteer *the curate from our church* I told him about being sacked and about my criminal record for theft a couple of years earlier one day we got out of the canoes and he suggested going into the church to have a look around I said I don't think I'm welcome in the church I'm wet and grubby and my life is a mess and David said to me that's exactly who Jesus wants to meet with and how he can forgive just about anything

a week later back home I had to go and the Boss who sacked me... bizarrely he forgave me for my anger, I hadn't actually stolen anything but I walked home feeling a sense of forgiveness from him and somehow from God

So began 18 months of asking big theological questions of Nigel at college like does God care for those who suffer, and what about people with diminished mental faculties - can they be saved?

And then in March 1981 I made an overnight coach trip to Blackpool I was training as a Swedish masseur Nigel suggested I read a book on the journey called *Mr God this is Anna* a story about a young girl and a man with mental handicap who taught her all about Jesus the bus stopped at Digbeth bus station at 2:30 in the morning and the juxtaposition of the snow falling against the dirty floor of the car park spoke to me everything I'd been reading - it made sense of David's words about forgiveness and love of God for a guy with a messy so at 2:30am in the morning in Digbeth bus station by a Westlars Hot Dog van I asked Jesus to come into my life. He did! Now I said I would talk to you about Jesus this morning and so far all I've really done is talk to you about my encounter with Jesus

What was going on for Jesus during all the time I was exploring the Xn faith?

It is just as the parable of the lost sheep parable - Jesus was looking for me *even as I was looking for him* he was reaching out to me *even as I was trying to understand who he was*

Bishop Westcott Professor of divinity at Cambridge was once approached by a zealous undergraduate who asked 'Are you saved?' The Bishop responded that it was a good question but asked the young man what he meant, mentioning three Greek passive participles of the Greek verb 'to save' his point was...

- I have been saved
- I am being saved
- By the grace of God I shall be saved

Jesus sits behind it all...

My coming to faith was just the beginning of a life long Rnp with Jesus who I meet in my prayers, I read about in the bible and who sometimes speaks to me when I least expect him to... dreams, sermons, creation

Jesus sits behind it all...

even this week I had an experience of Jesus saving me as his Spirit drew to my attention an unhelpful behavior of mine which I then apologised for the next day.

All too often we keep JC in a stained-glass window or dusty family Bible or we box him into a Sunday morning at church
Jeremiah spoke of God's messenger being shut out

He also spoke about fruitfulness, message + sacrifice

Jesus is used to being shut out of people's lives, but he loves it so much more when his message of love is heard, his Spirit can bring fruit in a person's life and we live in the light of his sacrificial death + his utterly remarkable & unique life giving resurrection.

BUT Jesus is always looking to renew his relationship with each of us who have met him and will meet him this morning in the bread and wine

- Jesus of the OT who led the people through the wilderness, > Jesus of the gospels and the NT epistles, setting the world on fire with God's love and redemption
 - Jesus of Johns revelation who at the end of earth time will judge us all and usher the faithful into eternity
- Jeremiah says that Jesus is the fruitful tree that would be cut down and forgotten -

And yet it's said 2kyrs later that our lives have no meaning unless JC is at work within 'em so let me ask you?

'Is JC in your life on a regular basis?

Or are you in danger of leaving him in a stained glass window, a dusty family Bible or here on a Sunday when you go home to lunch?

The Jesus I speak to on a daily basis is consistent with the Jesus of creation the scriptures and the church.. >He is still setting captives free (I experienced that just a week ago)
>He is still in business of healing the sick and feeding thousands... when we work with him in these causes'
>And He longs to be the subject of our heartfelt worship in just the same way that he gives his life, his heart and his spirit freely to us...

The Jesus I worship is the same radical, life changing, community transforming Son of God, that I call my closest friend and meet in my daily prayers.

And He very much wants us to introduce him to our friends

Jeremiah 11.18-20

It was the Lord who made it known to me, and I knew;
then you showed me their evil deeds.

But I was like a gentle lamb led to the slaughter.

And I did not know it was against me that they devised
schemes, saying,

‘Let us destroy the tree with its fruit,
let us cut him off from the land of the living,
so that his name will no longer be remembered!’

But you, O Lord of hosts, who judge righteously,
who try the heart and the mind,

let me see your retribution upon them,
for to you I have committed my cause.