

Our place before God as community

Reverend Rob Lamerton
26 October 2003, Pentecost 20

- Job 42: 1-6, 10-17
- Psalm 34: 1-8 (19-22)
- Hebrews 7: 21-28
- Mark 10: 46-52

This is transcribed from notes.

It was great to talk to Rebecca Newland's mother Ruth last week at the fete and to hear her say how happy she is living in her place in Newcastle, and I must confess that although travelling was great last month it is good to be back and feel like I belong.

Today's meeting to elect wardens and parish council is in some ways also about having a sense of place or maybe developing more and more the sense of who we are as a faith community at St Philips' and knowing the kind of ministry we have in this corner of Canberra. Those will become clearer as we look to God as individuals and as a church family.

Job — story so far

— Job angry at God because had believed he was OK. — self righteous
— believed in his own goodness.

Then God speaks asking does he know all there is to know?

Today — Job realises his dependence on God.

v 1-4

and as part of his turning to God he begins to see

v 5

and repents (lit. turns back — to God)

but the God he turns to is a different God — he has a new understanding of who God is.

And we too must have new understandings which relate as much to our experience as to the discoveries of science and to the bible.

This is what Bishop Spong and others want us to discover. They are accused of abandoning God — — so was Jesus!

lepers — life and death

women — heaven and hell

but they want us to deepen our faith by deepening our understanding of God.

to see as Jesus saw.

The story of Bartimaeus has similar elements:

Son of David — Bartimaeus claims him as Messiah and clearly “sees” who Jesus is.

Repentance

Restoration of sight

Realisation of his calling

Bartimaeus is healed of his blindness.

In this case blindness is symbolic of the blindness of the disciples and the Christians of Mark's day who saw only the miracle worker Jesus rather than the suffering servant. Whereas the disciples before him and especially James and John have "not seen" just who Jesus is, Bartimaeus comes to "see" and to follow Jesus on the way — which we discover is the way of the Cross.

We are called to discover and rediscover our place before God and especially as a community of faith to have our eyes opened so that we might follow Jesus on the way.

In the light of the high heavens
and the infinity of dawns in space,
in the darkness of ocean depths
and the sea's ceaseless waves,
in the glistening of a creature's eyes
and the dark life-blood that ever flows,
in every emanation of creation's life
and the warmth that moves my body,
in the inner universe of the soul
and its everlasting foundations
your glory glows, O God.
In every shining of the world's inwardness
and the warmth that moves my everliving soul,
your glory glows.

From: Sounds of the Eternal: A Celtic Psalter
J. Philip Newell