

The Wilderness – reflection day 4

Reading: Psalm 24 verse 1 *“The earth is the Lord’s and everything in it, the world and those who live in it; (NRSV)*

In the first of these reflections, we considered the words of Matthew’s gospel, chapter 4 and verses 1 – 11. Those of you who are familiar with this story will remember that having been rebuked twice, *“...the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendour; and he said to him, “All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me” (verses 8&9 NRSV).* Our Psalm reading today makes it clear that those kingdoms were not the devil’s to give!

Today, the whole world is going through a wilderness experience due to the coronavirus outbreak. On day 1 I suggested that being in the wilderness was about facing an uncertain future, where something has had a profound affect upon our lives, where we lack a clear sense of direction and where everything seems confused. It seems to me that the whole world is now facing these things.

Can anyone tell me when the virus will be brought under control? Can any of us say when we can return to the cinema, the restaurant, the sporting arena or the church? Do we know when countries will open their borders again and when airlines will be back to the way they once were? No – around the whole world, no one knows the answers to these and a myriad of other questions. We are in a situation of confusion, our future uncertain and we have no clear sense of direction. We are all in the wilderness!

But wait – haven’t we said on previous days that God is also to be found in the wilderness? So here we are; God, the church and the world in the wilderness together. The whole of creation, which the Psalmist reminds us belongs to God, are here in the same place and time. Is it not beholden upon Christians to be therefore asking what we are saying to one another?

What is God saying to the church and the world at this time?

What is the church saying to God and the world at this time?

What is the world saying to God and the church at this time?

May those who have ears to hear, hear what we are saying to one another. And through all the pain, heartache and bereavement of this wilderness experience, may there emerge a deeper understanding of what it is to be human beings – made in the image of God, made to love one another and made to cherish the earth he created.

For all belongs to him.

Blessings

Peter