

(PP1) Becoming human- giving glory x 31 Sunday 05 August_2018.

Background text READ Revelation 21: 1 - 6. 5 dimensions of relationship.

(I tweeted yesterday) *In process of following Jesus and becoming more like him there are 5 dimensions of changing relationship. Changing in relation to God, to neighbour, to myself, to creation environment and to time. Thanks to Bruce Milne's helpful idea on dimension in relationship. (PP2)*

This year we are exploring what it means to be truly, fully human. Also, I believe that as we seek individually and together in community to be more human we will bring greater glory to God by the way we live our lives in relationship to these 5 dimensions.

In July we thought about the biblical metaphor of the human heart. Humans have hearts which can be open or closed to hear God or be deaf to God. They can be stony or responsive.



How the term HEART is used in the Bible. The heart is not just the beating organ but the seat of our emotions, understanding, ethics, where we hope, plan and dream. HEART – the fulcrum of faith and feeling as well as the mainspring of words and actions. The heart is the seat of our desires. The word heart has come to stand in the Judeo-Christian understanding for humanity's entire mental and moral activity – both the rational and emotional elements. It is used figuratively for the “hidden springs of the personal life”. **(Vine's)**

Jesus in describing the heart & mind of a people quotes Isaiah 6 in Matthew 13: 14, 15. Jesus says of the Hebrew people: their “hearts that have become grossly waxed.” (hardened v15 in Greek) - so that they can't see with their eyes or hear with their ears and thus understand with their hearts.

We have already been considering - The image of God in humans – is NOT seen in a physical form or likeness (as God is spirit) but in terms of knowledge and moral awareness and the possibility of relating in friendship to God. I am suggesting today that the image of God in humans can be further enhanced/ further developed in at least 5 dimensions.

(I said) *In process of following Jesus and becoming more like him there are 5 dimensions of changing relationship. Changing in relation to God, to neighbour, to myself, to creation environment and to time. THESE DIMENSIONS NEED TO BE EXPLORED TO BE KNOWN AND KNOWN.*

I am not using the term “5 dimensions” in terms of physics or geometry but in terms of relating to people, to myself, to the environment and to God and the complex issues of time. The term “dimension” suggests depth and extent in these areas. We are not one dimensional - as people we engage in complex relationships, we engage with place and space, but also,

we are able to engage not just in material encounters but in spiritual dimensions too. We live within real time, but the Bible says humans can also relate to “eternity”.

Regeneration and Sanctification:

The NT talks about being made alive in Jesus Christ (born from above/ born again *John 3*) and becoming more like Jesus. This combined thought is expressed succinctly by Paul in *2C5:17* *When someone is in Christ they are a new creation (species) – the old has gone the new has come.*

This “making new” needs to be expressed in all 5 dimensions for us to become more fully human. To become more human is for the image of God to be restored and there needs to be growth of a new understanding and heart.

This change/ transformation/ renewal takes TIME and happens through **engaging with God’s Word** (Eternal LOGOS outside of time created time and entered time as human):

- Written – scripture story of God and people
- Incarnate and risen – Jesus
- In community – God’s people
- World – in it’s fallenness and marred image/ the experience of living

We have spoken already in some detail of the Fallenness of humanity from relationship with God and the consequences, but we must also understand that through not just belief in Jesus’ claims but in receiving Jesus into our lives we will become true children of God. (*John 1: 12, 13*).

Humanity shall rise again to the heights from which it has fallen but with a new appreciation of God’s mercy and love. We have yet to grasp the extent, the full dimensions of God’s love.

Dimensions in God’s love? Length, breadth, depth, height - *Ephesians 3: 18, 19 – The hugeness of God and God’s humungous love.* Not just 4 dimensions but all dimensions – how ever many there are in love. Main request in this prayer is for us to come to know and understand God’s love and to experience it with our roots and foundations being in God’s love: depth of love.

Those who believe in and receive Jesus will be fully remade in the image of Jesus - truly fully human. *1 C 15:49* *Just as we wear the likeness of the man made of earth, so we will wear the likeness of the Man from heaven.* (+ *Romans 8: 29; Col 3: 10*).

When will this be experienced in fullness? This will be in the new age ushered in by Christ’s return to earth – *2P 3:13* *But we wait for what God has promised: new heavens and a new earth, where righteousness will be at home.* (+ *Revelation 21: 1 – 5*).

In this glorious new heaven and new earth, we will be perfectly related in the 5 dimensions spoken of. The purpose and work of God described in *Ephesians 1: 10* will be complete. *This plan, which God will complete when the time is right, is to bring all creation together, everything in heaven and on earth, with Christ as head.*

So, in the passage *Revelation 21* Jesus declares: ***I am making everything new.*** This is the work of the Spirit of Christ now in those who seek the Kingdom of God and it will be completed when the time is fulfilled. NOW God is renewing these dimensions but in a world

and people which is clearly fallen, broken and decaying. 5 dimensions describe new challenges in relationship that we must consider.

- (1) **To God** – Rev 21: 3 and 22: 4 Read both. Knowing God face to face.
- (2) **To neighbour** – Ephesians 4: 3 and Rev 21: 10 In Ephesians we see that we currently struggle to maintain unity and peace. Future new relationships in city.
- (3) **To ourselves** – Rev 21: 4 *God will wipe away all tears from their eyes. There will be no more death, no more grief or crying or pain. The old things have disappeared.*
- (4) **To the environment** – Romans 8 21 – 23 + Rev 22: 1 *fol* Current struggle in environment and future harmony.
- (5) **To time** – 1 Peter 1: 3 *fol* (+ Rev 21: 4) *Let us give thanks to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! Because of his great mercy he gave us new life by raising Jesus Christ from death. This fills us with a living hope, and so we look forward to possessing the rich blessings that God keeps for his people. He keeps them for you in heaven, where they cannot decay or spoil or fade away. They are for you, who through faith are kept safe by God's power for the salvation which is ready to be revealed at the end of time.*

When Jesus returns God's glory will be revealed to all the World 1 Peter 1: 7. At the moment it is both apparent (to some) and veiled (to others). At the moment God's people will face many trials, sufferings and sadness (as do all people) but enduring these proves our faith is genuine (according to Peter). *Then you will receive praise and honour and glory **on the Day when Jesus Christ is revealed**.*

And so those who believe in and receive Jesus into our lives begin to live life differently in relation to these 5 dimensions.

With God's help we can say: *It is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me. This life that I live **NOW**, I live by faith in the Son of God, who **LOVED** me and gave his life for me. Galatians 2: 20.*

We have already passed from death to life (symbolically expressed in Baptism). The reality in this time is that we will have to go through bodily – physical, temporal decay and death. But “eternal life” – life in fulness knowing God and the One he sent (John 17: 3 and 10:10) begins and can be experienced in growing reality in the NOW. My experience is that sometimes it is snatched away from us or we “throw it away” when we do not value it but **God's wants us by his grace to know increasingly the depth, length and full dimension of his love for us.**

Although earlier in our series we considered the voice in our ear reminding us “memento mori” – you are human, you will die we also need to look to and relish the future point in time and beyond time – **the Day** of Christ's return, our bodily resurrection and the new heaven and new earth.

Our human fears are countered by the knowledge of God's love – shown fully in Jesus Christ. We look forward to being in God's glorious presence – at home at last.

This “hope which stands the test of time” – is God's purpose and desire for every human being. God longs for us to know this NOW – at this time and to “glorify God and enjoy God forever.” May God move our hearts to respond to his heart of love.