

Friends

As I write this, the heating came on this morning! The house temperature must have gone below 17 degrees. Confirmation that the season has changed.

As we enter Autumn, traditionally our thoughts might have turned to Harvest time, but these days modern life feels far removed from the agricultural calendar for most of us. Although maybe some of us have enjoyed some apples from the garden or picked some blackberries on a walk. At church we still mark Harvest as a time to reflect on all that we have been blessed with and to give thanks to the One from whom all good things come.

Amongst the worries, complexities and pressures of modern life, it is so important, and indeed good for us, to stop, breathe, take stock and appreciate all the good things in our lives. To remember all that we have been blessed with, to remember that we are loved, and to recall all that God has done for us and seen us through so far.

This remembering, this appreciating, is an important part of living into our relationship with God. When we remember we are loved and provided for, we grow in our capacity to love and provide for others. When we walk with Jesus, we grow in our desire to help others walk with him too. For we know what a good God we have, and we long for others to know Him too.

That is what we have been reflecting on in our Generosity and Gratitude Season in September. That our own generosity is an outworking of our faith in God and our love for Him and his people. We can live generous lives when we appreciate and notice all God has first given us, not least through His Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ, and remember we are loved and called to love others.

Too often our generosity is offered according to own will and agenda. Maybe driven by guilt for not being in poverty. If we give a bit away, we can feel less guilty about the rest we keep for ourselves. Maybe driven by having more than we need. Too often we give what we don't want, the dregs, the lefts overs – we have our fill and then offer what's left over. But we are called to live Generous lives motivated by a love for God and a love for each other. If we give out of love then there is no guilt or resentment or apathy, but rather joy and peace from being able to offer something of value to another or the mission of God. Especially when it actually costs us something, for that is true generosity.

In September we looked at what we mean by Generosity – we looked at Mark 14:3-9 and Mary of Bethany and reflected that when she anointed Jesus she was generous with her: time, attention, wealth, possessions, talent, reputation and comfort.

Yet the one thing that united all these aspects of her generosity was her relationship with Jesus, that she loved Him and was loved by Him. Love was the motivation of her generous action.

So I pray that this Harvest season you take stock and pray, feel God's love for you, and see in what ways He may be calling you to grow in generosity and gratitude.

Love and blessings,

Jo