

Sunday 11 September 2022

Remembering the Queen: let us Feed on Christ

Where were *you* on when you heard the news?

I know each of us will remember.

Life changed on Thursday evening, for every citizen of this kingdom, however great or small a part the monarchy plays in our lives and affections.

It was, as TS Eliot put it, *a point of intersection of the timeless with time*.

Yet we now know that the Queen had died a few hours earlier, allowing her family the brief and precious privacy to gather and mourn their beloved mother and grandmother.

And as Christians we believe that, in her own inimitable way, and having fulfilled her final state duty just two days before, Queen Elizabeth slipped away quietly and humbly, taking the shortest, yet greatest of all steps into the loving arms of her heavenly Father, into eternity, beyond mortal pain and sorrow, beyond the ravages of earthly time.

She is indeed at peace and will rise in glory.

All that has followed and will follow in the next 8 days until her funeral, is a drawing out, a gracious extension of that *point of intersection of the timeless with time*.

For many of us, this mourning connects us afresh to losses in our own lives. For those bereaved during the pandemic, whose mourning and funerals were so limited, it provides a space in which to express loss and grief, with others. In this final gift to us, our Queen has served her people yet again.

Today's well-chosen epistle, which Lynda read so beautifully, focuses too on the *intersection of the timeless with time*.

We live in the intersection, in the temporary and temporal,
limited by our human frailty,
'groaning under our burden' as Paul puts it.

This is not just a personal groaning, but,
as Paul describes in his letter to the Romans,
it's a groaning for all of creation to be rescued and renewed
and for all people to be released into the glorious liberty of God's children,
when Christ returns.

We are experiencing and witnessing that groaning across the world at this time
– catastrophic floods in Pakistan, extreme famine in Africa,
uncontrollable wildfires in California, devastating war in Ukraine...
the list goes on and we cry out,
'How long, O Lord? Have mercy on us.'

Life in the intersection, where we all live, is full of pain and sorrow.

But thanks be to God, through Christ it is also full of hope,
the hope of our heavenly dwelling, of eternal rest
and new life with God our maker and redeemer.

How then, shall we live, in these mourning days,
in this very particular *intersection of the timeless with time* in our lives?

If you remember one thing I say this morning, may it be this:
we feed on Christ.

on his words,
on his presence through the Holy Spirit,
and on the earthly symbols of his heavenly life,
at the meal he told us to share to remember him.

we feed on Christ- for Christ alone sustains us and gives us life.

As well as eating and multiplying it,
Jesus said a lot about bread and taught us to pray for it daily

He told us that we do not live by bread alone,
but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.

He wasn't talking about adding butter, marmalade or peanut butter,
but about the *intersection of the timeless with time*
– that whilst our human bodies need food, daily bread,
we also need the food of eternity, the word of God to us in the Bible,
the prayers and liturgy we cherish, maybe know by heart,
the word of God through others.

In these days, there are many, many words around.
As we consider life and death, time and eternity,
may it be **the word of God**,
not just the pages and programmes of our many media channels
on which we feed, through which we are fed by Christ.

We feed on Christ through his word. for Christ sustains us and gives us life.

We feed on Christ through his most precious gift of the Holy Spirit,
the inner presence and power of God,
who is Comforter and Helper, Jesus with us in our loss and pain, confusion and
fear, guiding, providing, bringing hope and new life.
The Holy Spirit isn't for a special class of super-Christians,
but for all of us who trust in Christ.
We don't need to be in church or say complicated religious words.
'Come Holy Spirit' is enough, as we are still and allow God to be present with
us, to bring us peace.

So, we feed on Christ through his word, though his presence by the Holy Spirit
We feed on Christ- for Christ sustains us and gives us life.

Finally, as we journey through the intersection,
these days of remembering and mourning,
and of looking forward,
we feed on Christ by eating the earthly bread
that reminds us of his earthly body,
as we come to Communion.

This heavenly feast, to which Christ invites us,
is the meal for the journey,
the sustenance for our lives in the intersection.

Jesus has made this journey ahead of us,
sustained by the word of God and empowered by the Holy Spirit.
He passed through points of intersection of the timeless with time,
when he left eternity to come and live among us,
when he reconnected eternity and time through his saving death on the cross,
when he rose from death but remained among us a while
as the living proof of eternal life
and when he returned from earth to heaven, from time to eternity,
where he lives and reigns, today and for ever.

Jesus will pass through the point of intersection once more,
when he comes again in glory as King and judge,
to usher in the Kingdom of God,
the new heaven and new earth.

We feed on Christ,

**the living Word of God, the Bread of Life,
for Christ sustains us
walks with us,
and has made the journey ahead of us.**

Let us look to him, and feed on him in our hearts by faith, with thanksgiving.

Amen.