

Sermon Wednesday 6 May 2020

by Rev. Bill Church

(Readings: Eccl. 1. 1-10; Jn 16. 12-13)

During lockdown, quizzes have been more popular than ever – online, of course. Clubs have had them, churches have had them, families have had them. Many of the questions are unashamedly trivial in every way, but some have raised intriguing possibilities.

This grows from the human instinct to search out facts, then, one hopes, check out their truth and, for Christians at least, apply them with and towards wisdom.

One question in a recent family quiz was: 'For how many centuries have people been making silk?'. The answer, apparently, is 47. 47 centuries. Amazing.

If the question had been: 'For how many centuries have people been making string?', the answer, even more amazingly, would have been something like 500. 500 centuries. And the makers were Neanderthals, cavemen, pre-humans as we thought, making proper three-braided string. That's a blow to our claim to be the exclusive masters of the world.

And another question: 'Did God love the Neanderthals?'

Yes, of course, but did they know God loved them? That is unanswerable.

Every time we look at archaeology, history gets longer.

Every time we read of research into the small scale, particles and quarks and so on, it all gets weirder.

Every time astronomers map the universe – or should it be universes – it is seen to be vaster.

Can there be intelligent life out there?

And, if so, does God love it?

Yes, of course, but does it know God loves it? That is currently unanswerable.

We are an infinitesimally small part of the universe.

It is really hard to grasp that God can oversee such vastness – or even the teeming billions here on earth – And, yet, at the same time, also have a care for each one of us individuals.

Of course, if we are in pain or grief; or if we are anxious for the safety of those we love; or if we see our livelihood

draining away, we are less likely to muse upon the vastness of space. But the same questions apply.

Is God with us, loving and caring for us? Yes, of course.

But can we hold onto that truth – that God does love and care for us, as well as for all those multitudes whom we do not and cannot know?

Please pause for a moment: first to praise God for the wonders of creation and to thank God for all those who are exploring and expanding those wonders; and then to focus in on our lives and on the lives of those whom we love and on everything in them that needs God's healing hand.

Hold on to that truth -
that God does love and care
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