

2019-02-17 ... 6.30pm Evensong ... Revd Canon Judy Hunt

Galatians 4: 8 – 20

‘Superstition’

Introduction ...

Have you noticed that many sports people make the sign of the cross as they compete?

Track athletes as they drop into the starting blocks ...

Footballers before a penalty ...

Ski jumpers before launching off ...

When you see it – do you regard it as a sign of faith or superstition?

We’ll come back to that ...

First let’s remind ourselves of verses from our second reading:

Galatians 4: 8 – 11:

Now, however that you have come to know God, or rather be known by God, how can you turn back again to the weak and beggarly elemental spirits? How can you want to be enslaved to them again?

You are observing special days and months and seasons and years. I am afraid that my work for you has been wasted.

St Paul here and elsewhere is clear ... what Jesus has won for us through his birth, life, death and resurrection ... and our faith in that ... is all we need ...

all we need for security

all we need for purpose

all we need to be in good relationship with God.

Relying on anything else

... be that our good behaviour

our religious rituals

our ... anything!

PTO

Relying on anything else is – at best superfluous ... and often worse ... superstitious and undermining of true faith and reliance on God.

In Galatia – it was reliance on keeping to a certain calendar and acting accordingly.

I doubt that is probably the main way in which most of us would be tempted away from simple but deep faith.

Yet there might be other things.

Reflect for a few moments:...

on what do you rely for security ...

well being ...

having a good relationship with God?

Is there anything that has become or is becoming more akin to superstition than faith?

Pause ...

Conclusion ...

I began by asking how we regard those sports people and their making the sign of the cross: **Faith or superstition?**

Of course, we can't answer that question without knowing what's going on in their hearts and minds.

But we do need to reflect on our own practices, habits, rituals ... **Faith or superstition?**

I'm going to finish with a quote from Katherine Hinkson which may be helpful:

“Superstition is the cruelist thing in the world.

Faith is to live in the sun.

Superstition is to sit in darkness”