

**2020-09-20 ... 6.30pm Sermon and Video Reflection ... Mrs Jane Rylands**

**Ezekiel 33: 23 then verse 30 to Ch 34:10; Acts 26: 1, then verses 9 - 25**

**Ezekiel is a prophet** who has been struck dumb by God. He is only able to speak if God has put the words into his mouth! In tonight's reading he is calling out the shepherds for failing to protect the sheep. For shepherds, read 'leaders'. The reading continues later in the chapter with God saying that he will take on the rescue of his sheep himself. God will be the shepherd.

Reading this from our standpoint, we see this prophecy come true in Jesus. And Jesus passed this role on to us when he said to Peter 'Feed my sheep'.

We must be mindful of what sort of shepherd we are.

**In Acts** we have Paul talking Christian faith to power, to King Agrippa – great grandson of the Herod of the Nativity story.

Interestingly it seems that Agrippa has a knowledge, maybe even an interest in the politics and faith arguments of the Jews. Paul even intimates in the next verses that he knows Agrippa believes in the Hebrew God.

God's word is for everyone – it is a complete leveller of those who are great or small in secular society. These divisions are destined to disappear before God.

God requires each of us, wherever we fall in the pecking order, to look first to ourselves, to lead lives that mimic that of his Good Shepherd, Jesus, caring for and feeding those in our care.

We are also called to speak out, to challenge those 'greater' than us. To call to account those abusing their position of power, those who seek to benefit themselves at the expense of others. He says that he will give us the words to do so.

Faith and politics are inextricably bound together, and people will know us by the way we express ourselves.

Our work is to bring to fruition the prayer Jesus gave us – that heaven should come to earth, its ways our ways.

In the words of the morning dismissal, we are to

***Go in peace to love and serve the Lord*** Amen

**20 Sept 2020 Reflective Video/phone message ...**

Our Father in Heaven, Hallowed Be Your Name. Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

Words you are most probably familiar with, the beginning of the prayer which Jesus taught his disciples when they asked him how they should pray.

Christians believe that this is the destiny of the world, that one day everyone will have heard of and believe in the God of Love and that every knee will bow at the Name of Jesus. Heaven and earth will be one and the same.

Christians also believe that Jesus' presence on earth means that the work to answer this prayer has already begun. And Jesus commanded his followers to continue to spread the good news about him and his loving Father.

**WE each** have a part to play in growing the signs of heaven, the Kingdom of God, on earth, In our lives we are to both look after those in our care, and also to speak out when those in power abuse it and fail to protect those that they have responsibilities towards.

We will have the authority to speak out if we first apply God's rules to ourselves because others will see in us that God's way is the good way.

Our morning services often end with the command ... Go in peace to love and serve the Lord .... The response is a prayer ... ***In the Name of Christ, Amen ... So be it!***