

Isaiah 43: 1 – 7; John 10: 11 – 16

'Honesty'

Introduction ...

Honesty ... being honest have become highlighted qualities ... desirable qualities in national and international leaders over the last couple of years in particular.

Honesty about Covid

Honesty about war

Honesty about economics too

And here in the service – at a much more local and personal level **honesty** is important too.

Christian Faith ...

One of the things that I think is really important about the Christian Faith is that there is an **honesty** about the reality of life ... including when it's really tough ... there's no pretence. Our God encompasses light and darkness, and our Faith includes the twin realities of great joys: wonder and awe at creation, celebrations with friends, purpose and satisfaction, giving and receiving love ... but also the reality of injustice, of pain, of grief.

And so in our first reading from Isaiah – the difficulties in life are there – are **honestly** acknowledged.

At times we may feel as if we're struggling through raging waters or passing through flames of fire. For some here, the torrent of grief or anger or lostness may have been like that since being bereaved. Through the loss of a loved one – or for other reasons – we can feel about to be overwhelmed, submerged, washed away.

Strong words ...

Strong feelings ...

Honesty ...

And **honesty** in the Christian Faith that such faith does not prevent or protect against such feelings and experiences. **Honesty** that a life of faith is not the same as a fairy-tale existence.

Us and God ...

Yet also an **honest**, sincere, trustworthy assurance that God is with us ... and will bring us through.

So many, many people I know – including myself – can testify to this ... and it comes about through Jesus.

In our second reading, we were reminded about his willingness to lay down his life for us – and this was **an honest declaration** – he followed through on it. His death – was terrible and unjust – but his resurrection is a guarantee to us that evil, brokenness, grief, death itself – do not have the last word.

PTO

They are real – yes

But so is God's desire and power to heal, restore and bring new life.

Us ...

So as we gather here tonight, we can be **honest too.**

Honest in however we are feeling – which could vary from loss, grief and anger through to confusion or to relief and thankfulness – of remembering a life well-lived.

God is **honest** with us ...

We can be **honest** with God as we remember those who have died and as we bring the experiences and emotions their deaths have caused in us as we hear again those words from Isaiah:

When you pass through the waters

I will be with you

And through the rivers

they will not overwhelm you ...

You are precious in my sight

and I love you.