

Conflict and Tolerance

Isaiah 11:1-11

Mark 11:1-11

5 minutes.

Being an inclusive church, means that we have to recognise those who are different from us -

Different genders, different abilities, different races or sexuality.

So to be inclusive - is to learn to live with difference.

You're not like me, but you're welcome.

And I think we've discovered that God actually likes difference, and its part of his creation -

day and night, land and sea, and thousands of thousands of species of plants or animals.

Every human unique.

Difference is God's idea, part of what it means to be Church is that we learn to live with difference.

We are not good at it, though.

Look at teh middle east - they seem unable to accept or tolerate any kind of difference.

How about the village? Well the proposed 1700 homes seems to have made us a bit divided about our opinions. Will we emerge in open conflict? Or will we learn to tolerate?

Lets talk about Conflict and Tolerance

On Palm Sunday. Teh crowds go wild. The humble Jesus rides in. There are crowds on his side.

Yet there is conflict and difference - the pharisees, and others - who is he? What authority does he has. The Romans are worried.

Why are the crowds going wild. - look at Isaiah 11 -

Someone is coming with the Spirit of the Lord on them -

With wisdom and of understanding, counsel and of might.

And look - he's going to give decisions for the poor of the earth and slay the wicked.

This is all good, but it goes on.

The wolf will live with the lamb,

the leopard will lie down with the goat,

Woody Allen - a Jew - said - the Lion will lie down with the lamb, but the lamb won't get much sleep.

But how will such differences be tolerated, overcome on God's holy mountain?

But when the lion lies down with the lamb - the lion has to satisfy its hunger in other ways, the lamb has to overcome its prejudice, its life long instinct that 'this will not go well' .

To live with difference means we face our conflicting needs, and maybe discuss them.

Then to tolerate - means giving up some things .

The romans and pharisees would have to give up authority and power to the new king - and that didn't happen. Instead the people gave up their dream and hope of a Messiah. - but that's for Friday.

For an inclusive church, full of different people, we have to give up things.

If we want to include women more, - that means men have to lose a little, Or when we think about disability - there is a compromise, a tolerance - to have larger books or markings.

To include young people, we have to tolerate the kind of things they like - songs, or ways of doing things.

Putting our own needs aside a bit, tolerating - means not completely letting go of who you are - I am not saying becoming doormats - that's to replace one thing, with another, not to include the differences.

Finally - conflict is not bad. I love Christine, but that doesn't mean we didn't have conflict. She was very good at making it not personal, or hurtful, just a disagreement, a discussion about different ways of doing things.

We shy away from the word because we think it means violence, or forcing someone against their will, but actually, if God made difference, there was also going to be conflict between things - day and night - can't both take the same space. But in the conflict there is grace and beauty and all that it means to be alive. Between day and night is dusk and dawn - is breathtaking. Between land and sea - is the cliffs and beaches, between man and woman, comes conception.

The kingdom of God doesn't mean we're all the same!

It means we'll be able to tolerate each others differences because we are accepted as who we are.