

Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2021. Communion with Baptism .. of Arlo

Text: Micah 6:8 I John 4:7-16

## INTRODUCTION

### *SLIDE 1*

A momentous day today .. we are baptising Arlo, grandson.. a real joy and privilege

.... For us all, to mark Anna and Glyn and Cerys's joy in the gift of Arlo

... to baptise him, dedicate him to God...

I reflect today on what I wish for Arlo

... all sorts of things

- That he will be happy and healthy,  
...that he will look after his grandparents in their old age ..

I hope Arlo will develop all of his gifts and talents to the full

... he is already very adept at football.. you should see him booting a ball for hours, doing drop kicks

... sometimes in his grandparents' living room

- Maybe he will make it as a footballer ..  
....but then I fear with so much wrong influence in his family he may end up playing for Chelsea..

What I really hope .. and pray.. for Arlo is in the words of the reading we just heard – in Paul's letter to the Galatians, ...

... I hope and pray that through his life Arlo “will not grow weary in doing good”

... that he will keep going through his life, doing the right thing,

that he will give of his time, his money, his talents for the good of others,

that he will love, and in loving others he will know God...

And so, for all of us .. that this will be our aim in our lives – to not grow weary in doing good

..and in so doing we will know God who is love

...And we will realise that to go on doing good, we need more and more of God in our lives

... crucially, we need His embodiment of love... Christ Jesus

## **WHY WE MIGHT BECOME WEARY IN DOING GOOD**

### ***SLIDE 2***

It is obvious why we could become weary in doing good

- There is just so much bad news

Bad news around the world and affecting the world

... Arlo ... and Cerys .. and all their generation will have to live with yet more struggle and disaster, as we have failed to deal with Climate Change and Ecological breakdown..

... Indeed all extremely worrying and wearying

And then, of course, we could become wearied to the point of giving up in all of the bad things that happen again and again to the good people that we love

- *Our Church here has suffered this several times over recent years and now we have the utter distress and grief for John Witt, our friend and brother..*

We may well then be tempted to give up .. give up even hoping for good

... We may give up on any greater meaning, ....give up on belief in God

... Why not just live for yourself, eat, drink and be merry, .. at the very most, looking out just for family and friends ?

Why go on seeking to do good ... for others ?

## **THE CALL ON CHRISTIANS TO SERVE**

### ***SLIDE 3***

Well, for the Christian there is no option

... We saw in the sermon here last week – *available on our web-site if you want to catch up*

that a Christian aims to be formed in several practices, including serving others

- Jesus said, “Whoever would be great, must be a servant”

And His own life was the most supreme example of serving others

.. This sort of service that Jesus talked about and enacted, goes beyond the self, even beyond what we do for family and friends

... Such Christ-like service is about giving of ourselves for the sake of others

.. it is about, as we heard in that Galatians reading, “doing good to all people”

... Christ-like service demands time and emotional and spiritual energy without expectation of reward

➤ Such serving is costly ... it means putting ourselves out,

... giving up time that we would rather keep to ourselves,

.. Such serving means putting ourselves with people and in situations that take us beyond our comfort zones into places we would rather not be...

... Christ-like service means making these sacrifices simply for the sake of others,

This is the Christ-like service that St Paul told us to not be weary in continuing in..

Of course, all Christians fall short

... we often fail to be selfless even for our friends and family

.. let alone truly giving of ourselves for others

And yet, we can continue to aspire to what we should be, and can grow in being, by the grace of God

... We know there is no fulfilled life unless we truly learn to serve....

Jesus’ life of serving meant going on in the face of all opposition, confronting evil even into abandonment, torture and death

... loving to the end, never growing weary in doing good

Jesus’ pattern of life is the exemplar for being complete, to live in the way our Creator, Maker intended..

## **STRENGTH TO GO ON SERVING – GOD AT WORK IN THE UNIVERSE**

### ***SLIDE 4***

Christians, then, are inspired to serve, to not grow weary in doing good, by the example and teaching of Jesus

... If we only had example, though, we would all be defeated...

....unable to live up to such self-giving that Jesus demonstrated for the sake of others

But, Christians have so much more

... Essentially we believe that Love wins, Good, God will prevail

- In spite of everything we see of evil and destruction, of bad things happening to good people

.... We are on the winning side, love wins...

In the words of Martin Luther King, “Behind the harsh appearances of the world there is a benign power” (pg 40)

.. And thus, we can be inspired not just by the example Jesus gave us, but by hope in Him, in God – His presence and power in our lives...

Love wins...

### ***SLIDE 5***

- Because there is this benign power at work amongst us, we have sure hope that life is intrinsically good, created, sustained and developed by God who is love...

“God is love” proclaims St John, a friend of Jesus, who knew Him through and through

- This earth, the universe, were made out of love, for love, are sustained by love and will be brought to completion in love

... It is love that makes this life worth living, that gets us out of bed in the morning..

Again, in the words of Martin Luther King, “I am convinced that the universe is under the control of a loving purpose and that in the struggle for righteousness man has cosmic companionship” (pg 40)

Love wins....the intrinsic goodness of this life because there is a God of love...

### ***SLIDE 6***

- Because there is the God of love at work, we have sure hope in seeing that things can, do become better ...

... in so many ways we are a more inclusive, caring, prosperous people than our forebears

- In many ways, Christ-like ethics, values and actions have permeated through our society...

...Such change has come about by men and women of faith and no faith committing themselves to doing good, inspired by the conviction that good can prevail...

Love wins...

### ***SLIDE 7***

- And in our faith in the God of love, in Christ, we have sure hope that evil is, will be defeated and nothing of good from this life is wasted

... Christian faith ... faith in Jesus as the God of Resurrection, tells us that all that is good of this life is taken into the new heaven, the new earth

- Another dimension beyond this life, maybe a parallel universe,

... heaven where there will be “no more death or mourning or crying or pain.”

- The ultimate victory of love, of God in Christ

## **STRENGTH TO GO ON SERVING – GOD AT WORK IN US**

### ***SLIDE 8***

Arlo, all of us may you “not grow weary in doing good”..

... “do good to all people” .. “for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up”

... We have the teaching and example of Jesus of service,

..We have the inspiration that Love, God wins

...This world is intrinsically good, made and sustained by love, God

... Things can, do become better, more Christ-like as we commit ourselves to doing good..

... We have sure hope that there will be the ultimate victory of Love, of God

..Love wins

- God's example, inspiration can make us go on being committed to doing good,

But there is more.. more that will make all the difference

... God's presence within us can empower and strengthen us to go on doing good

- The promise of the Holy Spirit, Christ's Spirit, within us

.. Christians believe that we can do little of what we are supposed to do in our own strength

... We need God's strength within..

.. So, a commitment to not grow weary in doing good, is a commitment to make prayer, relationship with God, the foundation of our lives

- It is in set times of prayer, prayer through the day, talking, being with God, that we are filled by His Spirit, empowered to be more Christ-like

## **CONCLUSION**

### ***SLIDE 9***

This is my hope, my prayer for Arlo, ...

.. That he will know his life's purpose is to serve, as Christ Jesus served,

..he will go on doing good whatever the difficulties and challenges of life

.. That he will know God as the force of love through all existence

.. That he will commit himself to making things better, more Christ-like

.. That he will have sure hope that it will all make sense in the end... heaven awaits for him and all in Christ

.. That he will be formed in prayer, knowing the God who loves him through and through and will empower him to go on doing good.

This is my prayer for us all... do not become weary in doing good, do good to all people.. “at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.”