

Coach House Church BEACONS

MISSING THE MARK

3RD AUGUST 2020

Hi there everyone, greetings from Sunny Anglesey where I sit writing this beacon. I'm Andy and one of the reasons I love my 'second home' here on 'Ynys Mon', is because I can fulfil my passion for sailing (even if I'm not the best at it) at the sailing club we run off the site.

We race on most Saturdays during August here at Llanfwrog. We love the social interaction that this affords us, but the principle behind the racing is to raise money for the RNLI, a charity I support, and if you have listened to previous beacons ... you will understand why!

In a race today, one of the boats nearly took out a whole fleet as they took action to avoid missing a buoy which marked out the race course. They had misjudged the course they could sail on the current wind and had to cut across everyone in order to make a correction. Fortunately, we all managed to take our own action to avoid colliding with him, but it was all a little hairy for a few minutes. We laughed it off later, but at the time it was a nervous, fraught encounter!

The rest of us had sailed correctly, we had made the mark, but had to adjust in order to avoid catastrophe.

You may be wondering what point I would like to make today, well it's this...

In the book of Romans chapter 3 v 23 it says

'for everyone has sinned. We all fall short of God's glorious standard'

In other words, less we find ourselves boastful, we all have missed the mark.

I cannot praise my own standard (whether it be sailing or otherwise) because it falls well short of God standard, demonstrated to us by the sinless life of Jesus.

This is quite a solemn point – there is nothing I can do, I'm helpless, without hope – I like everyone am a sinner and have fallen short – therefore I am in danger of being disqualified from the prize – in this case eternity with God.

But Paul, as he writes this letter to the Romans, does not leave it there. He points out the truth, so that none of us can boast and then goes on to say...

'Yet, God, with undeserved kindness, declares that we are righteous'

Woah.... Wait a minute....

I'm a sinner, I've missed the mark, I don't meet Gods standard and yet.... YET, he declares me righteous! Righteous means that I am acceptable to God, and I have somehow met the standard required to have eternal life!

This is unacceptable to our human thinking – we are wrong and yet we escape punishment and even more so, go on to a beautiful endless relationship with our creator. This is mind blowing and difficult for us to fathom, and yet this is what god DECLARES over us. He doesn't just tell us; he declares it before others....He speaks it out.

This is important, because everything that comes from the mouth of God is true.

So here we have it. God declares us righteous and that's is that... or is it?

The danger of reading isolated verses from an entire book that tells is Gods story, is that we can take it out of context and miss the whole point entirely.

What Paul is trying to say to the Roman believers, is that there is nothing you or they can do to satisfy God. It is outside of our capabilities.

Therefore, God had to do something else to enable us to have fellowship back with him. The verse continues and tells us what God has done....

'He (God) did this through Christ Jesus when he freed us from the penalty of our sins, For God presented Jesus as the sacrifice for sin. People are made right with God when they believe that Jesus sacrificed his life, shedding his blood.'

God required a sacrifice that was pure and righteous and he knew that we were incapable of meeting this standard, so God himself provides the sacrifice for us in Jesus.

I'm not sure about you but this gives me every reason I would ever need to give thanks and praise to God....He is most definitely worthy.

Even the angels in heaven, cried out a new song when Jesus was revealed as the sacrifice to bring mankind back into a relationship with God. You can read about it in Revelation chapter 5 if you want to know more.

So , why is all of this so important to us?

Well, it shows how fair and just God is for a start! When God declares that He loves the world, man is quick to point out that war, famine and all the bad things that we see around us, god allows and some even go so far as to blame God. I am sure that you have heard someone say 'how can a loving God allow war or sickness'

The truth is that a loving God does allow these things, because he gave us the choice ... And we chose to reject God and therefore bring upon ourselves the punishment for sin which is death.

But God, shows that He is just and fair, by supplying the means by which we can return to the point before mans sin took effect, by believing in Jesus, who gives us His righteousness to cover our shame.

The Bible from start to finish displays to us that God desires us to have fellowship with him, but that we keep rejecting it. So much so that we convince ourselves that we don't need god or even that God does not exist.

All well and good, except that God displays that He is real in everything we see around us. Could this much beauty really be an accident?

When I took defensive action to miss the boat that turned in front of me in the race, I didn't for one moment think ... actually if I just smash these two boats together, what will come out of it will be a brand-new better boat! – now with insurance that may occur, but what I mean is that the collision of two small boats would not have resulted in a new boat there and then – it would actually have resulted in two very broken and sunk boats – probably without hope of repair. Do you get the picture? We are so conditioned to think from a human viewpoint that we do it Well without thinking!

God tells us to renew our thinking and with good reason! We cannot comprehend Gods grace and mercy towards us (so we just have to accept that it is!) and we would rather act to achieve something rather than be given something of worth without reason.

God gave us Jesus, freely and without complaint. Jesus paid the ultimate price of death on a cross, but before this He had lived a pure blameless , life without sin –

think about this - 33 and a half years without ever succumbing to the world view around him BEFORE surrendering to the cross. He did this because His Father asked him to, knowing that it was the only sacrifice acceptable.

And He did this because of love. A love which is so unfathomable, so deep, so all encompassing, so logic defying, so world changing – that it becomes the standard that all love is defined by. How could God love me so much that He would give His son to die for me? I don't know. But He did.

When I sail in a race and round a mark, I am reminded that Gods love for me, demonstrated in Jesus, means that I can fail. I can accept that I can never attain Gods love by my own means. I cannot meet Gods expectations, but He provides a way.

Once we know this and allow it to settle in our hearts, it will change the way we think and therefore, perhaps just as important, will dictate how we then act. It may take some time to act righteously but we do get better at it as we allow God to shape our thinking and our lives.

We may not make the mark and therefore deserve disqualification, but God puts us on the winning podium and gives us the highest prize.
Thank you, thank you Jesus.



PASTOR ANDY JACKSON



Coach House Church

leadership@coachhousechurch.org // 0161 432 5604

the coach house church, 222 wellington road north, stockport sk4 2qn