

Sunday 7th May – Coronation Songs of Praise

Isaiah 40:12-17, 25-end

Luke 22:24-30

Back in September we were mourning the death of Queen Elizabeth. Here in church just a few days after her death we remembered her commitment to selfless service to the nation; we rejoiced at her sense of humour and we recalled with thanksgiving her deeply held Christian faith which was at the root of all she was and all she did.

And yesterday some of us came together here in church and probably most of the rest of us watched at home as her son King Charles was crowned in the coronation service. He has a mighty task to follow in her footsteps.

The Queen was well aware that she could not fulfil the role of Sovereign in her own strength. She said this many times. In particular before she was crowned she said to the nation in her first Christmas broadcast

Pray that God may give me wisdom and strength to carry out the solemn promises I shall be making, and that I may faithfully serve him all the days of my life.

Over the past few weeks many of us have been using the readings and prayers in the Daily Prayers for the Coronation booklet. We have been thinking about the promises King Charles made yesterday, and what it means for the him (and for us of course) to live a life in the service of others. What help he will need from God as he seeks to fulfil this task. What help we need from God as well.

One of the prayers we used was this one:

*Almighty God
let thy wisdom be his guide
and let thine arm strengthen him
Let truth and justice,
holiness and righteousness,
peace and charity
abound in his days;
direct all his counsels and endeavours
to thy glory and the welfare of his subjects.*

Truth, justice, holiness, righteousness, peace and charity – wonderful attributes that mark out a life lived in the service of others – a life lived following the loving example of Jesus.

I am sure that this is the kind of life which we hope and pray the King will live as he reigns over and serves the nation. And also the kind of life that we would do well to live.

If these attributes are to abound in the nation, these are indeed the values the King – and all in authority for that matter - need to live out themselves. They are the very values that Jesus is advocating when he talks about being among us as one who serves, and when he gave the new commandment to love one another as he has loved us – and so they are the values we are called to live out too.

This won't be easy. It goes against so much of human nature. But it is the path Jesus invites us to follow. Not alone, he promises to be alongside us as we journey. Encouraging, supporting, consoling, guiding and inspiring. As individuals and as a community.

Those ancient words from the prophet Isaiah are ones that can give us encouragement here.

The Lord is the everlasting God,
the Creator of the ends of the earth.
He does not faint or grow weary;
his understanding is unsearchable.
He gives power to the faint,
and strengthens the powerless.
Even youths will faint and be weary,
and the young will fall exhausted;
but those who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength,
they shall mount up with wings like eagles,
they shall run and not be weary,
they shall walk and not faint.

So today lets pray that he gives us – and the King - the strength to do this; let us pray for him to be alongside us, and alongside King Charles, as we and he seek to live the kinds of lives of service that Jesus advocated and demonstrated.