



Religion today: tradition, modernity and change

Keeping the youth in church

Joy Martin (*addressing congregation*)

Good evening and welcome to St Michael le Belfrey. If you'd like to take your seats then we'll start this evening's service. I'm Joy Martin and I'm the Youth Intruders Coordinator here this evening and would like to give a special welcome to any of you folks who are visiting. We are going to mix together our confession and our prayers in a sort of Celtic mix which hopefully will come over the loudspeakers in a minute, and I want you as well to be holding the crosses which you should have been given as you came in because today is Palm Sunday and we hold in our hands the symbol of the cross and of Jesus dying and it just reminds me of the film Ben-Hur, when the girl who has got leprosy comes to the cross and as she looks at the cross and the water and the blood from the cross wash her, she's made completely clean and the leprosy goes. And that's what happens to us but it happens on the inside. As we say God we're sorry, his promise is I forgive you, and he doesn't lie, so that we can know the truth because Jesus died our sins are forgiven. What I want to encourage you to do is to just hold the cross and maybe to shut your eyes and to bring in your mind people that you know need the healing of the cross, but maybe you just need God's refreshen, so in the two and a bit minutes of this track, just allow the spirit of God to renew you, via the cross.

Joy Martin

Certainly within our church, the young people, or the young people within our society are more aware of a supernatural, than they've ever been in the past. And therefore are really searching for something. So I think there's probably two extremes. There's one side very very secular, and the whole like fashion business and music business on one hand. And at the same time and also a search for something other than what they've got at the moment. And I think sometimes even with our young people, there's this pull. Monday morning they're in school and it's a very secular life they've living. And yet in church on Sunday night, they're very spiritual. I suppose the challenge for us, is do those two meet?

Joy Martin (*addressing congregation*)

So it's because of the cross, and because our sins are forgiven, we now have access into heaven. Remember on Good Friday when it all went dark and Jesus cried, the curtain in the temple was ripped open. And it was then that in symbol, symbolically, we were allowed right into the holy of holies. And that's what we do in worship. So as we come to worship now, we come right into to God's presence so let's enjoy being in God's presence as we worship.

(congregation sing)

Pastor: (*addressing congregation*)

And now we come to the end of all that Jesus knows that His end is near. If you like, He has drunk the full cup of God's anger against sin. He has taken the punishment that you and I and everyone who ever deserves. He has taken that on himself and now is ready to say 'It is finished'. Was it an accident waiting to happen? Indeed there are those who would have looked at Him, any political experts, would have looked at Jesus and would have told him 'If you don't want to see you going, I won't be surprised if you end up on a cross'. Don't you go harassing and making difficult. But making things difficult for the leaders of the nation. Because if you do, they will get rid of you. If every leader who has leaders been remembered for the life they lived, Jesus is remembered by the death He died.

(Paula Medwell – sings solo)

Paula Medwell

I gave my life to Jesus Christ about 18 years ago. I decided to visit a church. And it was there and then that Christ came into my life, and I had a born again experience of Him. Since then, the greatest joy of my life is in worshiping the Lord. I believe worship is incredibly important to a Christian. It's a time where we meet with God. And we learn of Him, in a way like we can't learn through any other way. I've experienced His healing power. I've experience His love, in pain and I've experienced His presence that fills you with joy and gives you the strength to live in a world that can be very painful.

(Paula Medwell continues solo)

Pastor: *(addressing congregation)*

You are faced with a choice here. Either this blood means everything you have ever thought and you need to receive his forgiveness and eternal life, the removal of guilt and everything else, or you want to say I can go on in my own strength. But you know you can't, so I'm going to invite you to do something that is not easy at all. I want to invite you to take a very bold step. I want to invite you to walk down the aisle, no eyes are closed, and I'm going to invite you to walk down the aisle and come behind here because there are people here who are going to pray with you to receive the Lord Jesus Christ into your life and as you do walk down the aisle remember that Jesus is going to walk down with you. You will never be alone. Please would you like to come out as well?

And now as you stand, remember we are coming to share in the death of the Lord Jesus Christ in the Holy Communion. That is what that table is all about. All those who love the Lord Jesus Christ are invited to that table. They are told 'come, this blood and this bread, this wine and this bread is for you.

Pastor

In the last 20 years there has been a lot of change in worship, within the Anglican church. I think the churches that are nearly dying are the ones that are using ancient and modern. And in a way the reason why we moved into modern style worship was mainly because we knew that if we didn't do that, we wouldn't have all the youngsters in. They wouldn't be here. Therefore we needed something that was relevant and something that really spoke to their hearts. And that is a reason why we actually have worship that is modern and relevant.

Joy Martin

The youth is just growing. It's just as if it's coming alive. Young people just want to be part of a group that's really going for it. Instead of now wanting to go off and do socials together. They're wanting to have bible studies together and pray with each other. I had a girl phone me up today and say 'Oh we met for a prayer breakfast on Sunday morning'. I was horrified. I thought they might get so early on a Sunday morning. Although it was eleven o'clock. It's just great to see them sort of meeting together. Bringing their friends in. As if for them in a way in our post modern culture, their faith has provided them with a real sense of identity. And has given them a direction and a purpose in their lives.