

In the name of God who creates us, redeems us, and sanctifies us.

Listen O Kings and Monarchs, God will search out your works, severe judgement will fall on those in high places, for the lowliest may be pardoned in mercy, but the mighty will be mightily tested.

I wonder if you have picked up on the echo this passage from Wisdom has with our Magnificat, which we sing or say in this Church every day. Casting down the mighty from their seat, and lifting up the lowly.

So how does a text written about a 100 years before Christ's birth, by a Greek speaking Jew, in Egypt, can be of any relevance to us now? Well I would say, considering the current political scene of this country, or even at international level, is it very relevant. Both our Wisdom passage and the Magnificat are completely radical in their ultimate challenge to the powers that be. Both texts are so very political in their exposing abuse of power and privilege by those in high places.

I say the Magnificat every day, and I watch the news every day, and I don't know about you but I can't help but think, this! This is what the Magnificat is talking about! We have people in power who have forgotten about the lowly, left them behind. This is what Wisdom is calling out, those that rule over multitudes, and boast of many nations have become blind to those inhabiting those very nations. This is what Christ came to challenge. Challenge the Roman Emperor, challenge political oppression and occupation, bring them down from their mighty seat, and lift up the lowly to give humanity equality.

Did you know that the Magnificat has been banned in some countries, because it has been deemed too political and feared to incite riot and rebellion?

But this is exactly what Christ came to do, not incite riot, but give the lowly their voice, and to challenge the mighty to see the impact of their rule. Christ came to affirm God's message to the marginalised and the oppressed, that they deserve equality. Rally the meek, the hungry, the poor, to bring down the mighty from their thrones. A terrifying thought for those holding the privilege.

A great example of this, 3 days ago, is the 29 year old American congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, who challenged the American government and its laws regarding the financing of its politicians' campaigns,

and directly defied the abuse of power and privilege from the United States president. She did this with kindness and patience, and love, and at the same time with strength and great wisdom.

And this week again, the Democratic women of the same country, all wore white to a state event, to echo the American suffragette movement, and again to create a noticeable and strong united challenge to those with power and privilege. And it is about sharing the power. The suffragettes didn't want to take the power away from the men, but rather to have their fair share of it. Christ didn't challenge the Roman Emperor to become a King himself, but to offer equality to the people of Israel. Democracy hasn't become weaker because women have been allowed to vote, it has become enriched by it. And yes, equality will sometimes feel like oppression to those who have the privilege, but this is when wisdom becomes necessary, to seek out something greater and bigger than ourselves.

So moving on to the subject of Wisdom, one of the things I have always wrestled with is, what does wisdom look like? How do I know I am making the right decision? The beautiful poetry of the passage we read, the lovely allegories for wisdom, sitting at the gate, radiant and unfading, and she loves those who keep her law. I don't really know what this means for me, for us, today or tomorrow. How do I know I am not being mis-led? Am I not being mis-guided, am I making the right choices?

One thing I know for sure, is that wisdom isn't just found in books, it has to be tested, by community, by relationships. But what happens if, for example I am thinking of where the U.K community is finding itself today, if communities are being lied to, are being deceived, how do you discern wisdom among that? Well I suppose the Christian answer is quite simple. How are the weak and the oppressed being treated? Are the voices of the oppressed, and the poor, and the forgotten, and the marginalised, and the lowly being raised up? Are they given a voice at all?

With Brexit looming on the horizon, we are seeing that those in the most vulnerable positions in the country are being prepared for riots. The people with medication are being told to stock-pile. The vulnerable are being told to prepare themselves, while the mighty are being prepared to be entirely unaffected. The lowly are going to pay the price for the decision of the Privileged. The absolute opposite of the Christian message. The absolute abuse of power.

When wisdom prevails however, those who are strangers at borders are included. When wisdom prevails, those who are vulnerable are being supported and empowered. So how do you direct people to wisdom? How do you nurture aspiration to an egalitarian community?

Interestingly this is exactly what the first reading tries to do, as I said earlier, the wisdom of Solomon, was written by a Jewish man in Egypt, he feared the Jewish youth of his community was slowly turning away from their God and towards the gods of Egypt, and aimed this text with them in mind. It was never intended for any kings or monarchs, but rather to bring back the youth, the normal average people like you and me, who might easily enjoy our position of privilege, and forget to seek wisdom. To seek the kingdom of God. This passage is about me and you having a long hard look at where we stand in this community, are we the lowly or the mighty? Are we serving our own interest, or are we seeking wisdom, trying to bring about the kingdom of God?

And this is where we finish, God's kingdom embodies wisdom, and in embodying wisdom, it raises up the oppressed and the marginalised. Wisdom will direct the power. Wisdom and love is about the poor and the vulnerable. Wisdom is about standing by the side of the poor and vulnerable, praying with and for them of course, but also empowering the voiceless, and just as Christ did, publicly challenge abuse of power.

Wisdom is about holding people in love and kindness and still at the same time, holding the powers that be accountable for their actions and decisions. Wisdom in seeking the kingdom of God is about challenging the politicians, the institutions, the Church of England, the CEOs, the white people, the straight people, the men, the rich, that they should never go with their privilege unchecked.

Christ's love and wisdom is all about challenging privilege, and distributing God's love equally to all.

Amen