

## St James News: Thought for the day – Wednesday 22 July 2020

### Your Story – Revd Funke Ogbede

What is Your Story? How did you first encounter Jesus? When and where? If you don't think that you have had a convincing experience with Jesus, what is stopping you? Or why are you not sure that Jesus is in your life?

Many of you would likely remember where you were when the twin towers fell and about 3000 people perished in one day. Many will still have fresh and vivid memory of when the Grenfell Tower fire happened or where you were when Covid-19 became a reality in the country? You are likely to know or have heard of someone who died as a result? Where were you and what were you doing when this happened?

As a Christian touched by the Holy Spirit you must be able to recall when you first gave your life to Jesus or when you become aware of his presence in your life. How did you feel about the experience? Did Jesus find you like Zacchaeus on the tree or you heard His voice like Paul on the way to your own Damascus? What is your story?

In a restless, busy and ruthless world, what is your story as a follower of Jesus Christ? If you have not encountered Jesus, if you do not have a close personal experience of Him, this is the time to ask Him, with determination and humility, to come into your life and reveal Himself to you. Yes, you and you and you!

We all have a personal story to tell - story about life, love, work, family et cetera. We have our personal story as a church member and of God's exciting activities around us if not with us. We have a story that we ought to share. We have a testimony to give. Our story forms the basis of our relationships and in understanding of God's purposes for us.

How close is your walk with Jesus? Paul's ministry is built on his personal story of his encounter with God. He talks continually about God's grace and love in his personal life. He inspires us to live our life in response to God's invitation to journey with Him.

In the gospel, the story of the silent woman who anoints Jesus' feet with her tears, dries them with her hair, kisses Jesus' feet and anoints them with the ointment she brings, is a very different story with very different emphases. It reveals Jesus' power to offer both forgiveness and redemption on one hand, and the other is to do with faith. The woman needs Jesus in her life and a personal encounter. Jesus says to her: Your faith has saved you. Go in peace.

Paul says: *'by faith you are saved through grace'* and that you are justified by faith.

Faith in the power that is Jesus enables us to receive forgiveness and restoration to the community of God's people. It gives us God's shalom - fullness of peace.

Zacchaeus's story grows to include others when Jesus invites Himself to dinner at his house. As Zacchaeus' other guests and Jesus settle down for dinner, the setting leads to discussion and personal experience with Jesus.

We know the story of Abraham and his special relationship with God. We know the story of Moses from his birth, to his exile, to God's promises to him and the receiving of the Commandments. Of course, we know Jesus' story and His relationship with His Father. What is your story from birth to where you are today? What is my story?

Abraham believed God and it was reckoned to him as righteousness. For us, our relationship with God through Jesus is underpinned by *faith, hope and love*. We must have a personal encounter with Jesus to make sense of it all and write our own story.

**Prayer:** May God's love continue to grow in our hearts and lead us to a fresh encounter with Him In Jesus' name. **Amen**

**Bible passages:** Galatians 2:15-21; Psalm 32:1-11; Luke 7:36 - 8:3

**Hymn:** When we walk with the Lord, in the light of His Word

When we walk with the Lord in the light of his Word  
What a glory he sheds on our way!  
While we do his good will, he abides with us still,  
And with all who will trust and obey.

Trust and obey, for there's no other way  
To be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey.

Not a shadow can rise, not a cloud in the skies,  
But his smile quickly drives it away;  
Not a doubt or a fear, not a sigh nor a tear,  
Can abide while we trust and obey.

Not a burden we bear, not a sorrow we share,  
But our toil he doth richly repay;  
Not a grief nor a loss, not a frown or a cross,  
But is blest if we trust and obey.

But we never can prove the delights of his love  
Until all on the altar we lay;  
For the favor he shows, and the joy he bestows,  
Are for them who will trust and obey.

Then in fellowship sweet we will sit at his feet,  
Or we will walk by his side in the way;  
What he says we will do, where he sends we will go,  
Never fear, only trust and obey.

