

Sunday 9th June 2024; Trinity 2. Benefice Holy Communion Oswaldkirk.

As human beings we rely on our senses. Arguably the most important is our sight. Most people if asked what they fear most probably might say going blind. I think I would.

What we see gives us perspective on the world provides a way of regarding situations, facts, etc and judging their relative importance; the proper or accurate point of view or the ability to see it. objectivity; looking to a greater plan or reality beyond sight.

When we have our eyes tested, we are given those rather cumbersome glasses to wear to check our sight and our eyes from which the optician recommends corrective lens to wear. Then hopefully we see the world in a much more clearer way.

What then when it comes to seeing things with our spiritual eyes. Through what lenses do we see? First, our perspective should be on the faith that has survived for generations. We have the same faith, we believe, as the saints who have gone before us. Paul saw through the lens of faith just like Noah, Abraham, David, Isaiah. We have that same lens of faith as Paul and as our Lord Himself. They - even Jesus - looked for things they didn't yet see with their own eyes, but with the eye of faith based on the knowledge that we have God's promise that God raised Jesus from the dead and He will raise us also.

On a daily basis though we see great suffering around us in our lives and in the lives of others and in the world. The forms can be many: sickness, death, persecution of Christian brothers and sisters around the world, struggling and broken relationships, financial struggles. As Christians we are not exempt from this reality. Even though real, they

are transient. They are not going to go on forever. The other reality is God's future reality for His people brought to us in the present by means of the Spirit, namely the resurrection hope. God delivers this to us through His Word and Sacraments. The verb "renew" does not appear often in Paul's epistles, but it is used here to remind us that we are being "renewed" day by day through the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives. This is critical and to refuse or deny that happening is the unpardonable sin Jesus refers to sternly in the Gospel. To deny repentance, turning one's life around, and accepting the transforming change only the Holy Spirit brings, can only bring eternal separation from the ever-giving love of God. But, to accept God's grace is to be given new eyes, a new perspective, and insight into the greater reality of hope and eternal peace.

What eyes do you see through and therefore live out life? With what lenses do you examine and discern current reality? Are you focusing on the temporal transient realities of this world alone? Are you near-sighted? Only seeing what is right in front of you or are you far-sighted viewing life with the perspective by gazing into God's eternal promises? The world's present reality is seen with our eyes. The unseen world of God's rule and reign is seen through eyes of faith in Christ. As Christians, we must live our earthly lives in this fallen world. Paul did not trivialize this, and neither should we. Hence today, we continue to remember the sacrifices of those who gave up their lives for our freedom on the Normandy beaches eighty years ago this week, as His Majesty King Charles said on Wednesday, *"How fortunate we were, and the entire free world, that a generation of men and women in the United Kingdom and other allied nations did not flinch when the moment came to face that test."*

With our perspective of faith, however, we can face our tests and not flinch because as people who experience and

know God's mercy and grace, we are able to say with Paul that our earthly home and troubles are but momentary, even the greatest sacrifice. The greater reality is that when seen with the perspective that Jesus was raised from the dead to overcome our sin and death, the lens of faith is ours through our Saviour Jesus Christ because with this true perspective, we can each say, "I can see clearly now."

Thanks be to God. Amen.