

Thought for the Sixth Sunday in Easter

I invite you to read Psalm 98 before reading my reflection below.

I don't know if I'm the only one but I am getting confused as to when the seasons begin and end Spring, Summer Autumn and Winter had a pattern when I was growing up but its not the same now is it.

Is it just me or is it difficult to tell which season we are in?

And if it's difficult to tell which season of the year we are in is that also true in terms of identifying which season, we are in in the life of God's church. Is it Spring – are new buds blooming are we seeing the shoots of new growth in the life of the church universal? New shoots of growth in our individual lives?

Or is it Summer- amazing things happening lots of fruit, lots of success a real sense that God is active that your personal ministry is abundant.

Or is it more like Autumn a few things happening but it feels like we are past our prime its not what it once was but still in the change there are good things to celebrate some of the seeds we planted are being harvested. A certain growth in maturity in our own lives.

Or is it Winter – is nothing seeming to happen have we shrunk a bit –has your personal relationship with God turned cold or become frozen is the warmth of love somewhere in the past. Has the world frozen us out of its life forgetting there is even a God?

And of course, just like our weather being out of sync so our personal sense of where we as Christians are with God in the seasons can be different some of us in Winter some in Autumn some in Summer and some in the Spring. And frankly some of not sure which season it is at all as we live in this unreal world impacted by covid 19.

But here's the thing I'm not sure it matters where we are? What really matters is what are we going to do. The invitation at the beginning of Psalm 98 is very clear it asks each if us to "Sing to the Lord a new song".

Our starting point for writing our new song is to look back over the past and to recognise where God has been with us in the recent past. It doesn't matter whether we feel we have been living in the Spring, Summer Autumn or Winter what matters is that we recognise God has been with us.

In doing so we recognise the truth that God will not leave us, will never let us go whatever we are going through and when we have wondered what's the point its because we have lost sight of Gods presence even though he has still been here. The psalmist invites us to remember that and to move on to sing a new song.

When we first met with God – do you remember when you first met with God? – we were struck by something – it may be a very different thing that struck each of us but whatever it was it caused us to want to change to do things differently to start singing a new song.

Over time perhaps we have forgotten that song, perhaps we have forgotten why it seemed to be a good idea to follow God and its all got to be hard work. Maybe something has to change and perhaps the truth is that we have to discover a new song rather than singing the old song.

The question we need to ask ourselves is simply this – what is the new song we should sing to God today? In part it's an opportunity to start afresh from today to put behind us the things which we feel guilty about.

Yet to be a new song it also needs to recall something of the past there has to be continuity. The new song is about regaining that special relationship with God. If there is no link to God how can we have that special relationship?

How do we find that link, well to me its about recalling what God has done in the past that made us look at God and say your amazing – which made us say I want to be a part of that – I want to belong I want to be part of your team. Can you remember those things? Are they coming back to you?

We need to think about what God has done for us as individuals and as church – we need to give thanks for those things and as we recall all the good God has done in us, in our church, the good things God has done for us, and for our church.

We need to realise that that same God wants to do new things now. Are we ready, are we up for it? Are we ready to sing a new song?

But the new song is not just for us it is not just to rejuvenate us and make us feel good the psalm opens out the psalmist calls on all nations to say the Lord reigns. He invites all the nation to glory in God's name all are invited to come to God's courts.

I suppose I have one question for you to ponder -What song will you sing today?