

# Wood, hay, straw?

Today's Thought for the Day from Revd Pam Butler

Bible reading: 1 Corinthians chapter 3

*No-one can lay any foundation other than the one that has been laid; that foundation is Jesus Christ. Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw— the work of each builder will become visible, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each has done.*

As we take tiny steps towards a new normal one of the things I am most looking forward to is being able to read stories with my two little granddaughters.

The enthusiasm with which they engage with the stories is a lesson to behold. I have yet to see a congregation or house group engage with a biblical story in quite the same way as they engage with 'Three Little Pigs'. They huff and puff with all their worth to blow down the houses of straw, wood and brick. So engaged are they in the story that you don't have to ask them twice what is the best material for building a strong house.

The firm foundation on which every Christian life is built on is the love of God in Christ Jesus. But the story does not and must not end there. Any builder will tell you that firm foundations are essential for the stability of the house but as the house is built upwards and completed the foundations are not on view. What is on view are the materials that make up the walls, roof, doors, windows, floors. Sometimes the outer appearance of these can look fine, good in fact, but are they solid or mere façade, simply looking good on the outside.?

When we pray "Thy Kingdom Come, Thy will be done" what we are actually saying is 'May your will be done in me'. We are inviting God to reign supreme in our lives so that our words are his words and his deeds our deeds. We are asking him to fill his temple within us with his love.

If we could look from the outside in, what would the temple within us look like? How might God view it? Would it be built of costly choices we have made, times when we have turned the other cheek, when we have bitten our tongue, temptations we have resisted, times we have shunned materialism, encouragement we have given ..... or would it be pretty flimsy built of worldly materials, fleeting pleasures and peppered with pride?

I suspect the answer for most of is a mixture of the two.

I don't know about you, but I think living through the current pandemic a lot of the froth, the dross and the fripperies of life are being blown away. Somehow life has become to seem more sacred.

We have come to value life itself in a way that hasn't been seen since the end of the Second World War. Many have found the inner strength to do, to witness, to care, to love in ways they would never have thought themselves capable of doing. To love their neighbour as themselves. So often, when life is at its hardest we catch a glimpse of what it means to be fully human, what it means to be made in the Image of God. What humanity resembles when illumined from within by the Spirit.

I wonder what we will carry forward into life beyond this pandemic. Will we be changed? I think so and pray that our changed humanity will bring a smile to the face of God.