

## The Second Sunday after Epiphany

17-01-2021

St Cuthbert's Anglican Church – Tweed Heads

1 Samuel 3: 1-10      The voice of the Lord calls to Samuel

Psalms 139:1-5, 12-18      God knows us intimately, we cannot escape God

1 Corinthians 6:12-20      Your Bodies are members of Christ  
Glorify God in your Body

John 1:43-51      Phillip brings Nathanael to Jesus and they  
acknowledge Jesus as the Messiah

### Introduction

Today's readings speak of a God who knows us intimately. A God who loves us and a God who is longing to share in a relationship with us. I would like to explore this aspect of God today, and also look at the converse.

Are we seeking to know God intimately?

Do we love God?

And what are we doing to share in a relationship with God?

### God knows us intimately

Firstly, how do we feel when we hear that God knows us intimately? There is nothing that we don't know about ourselves that God doesn't already know.

I have to admit that at times for me it is a bit scary. It's even a bit hard to comprehend. God knows us better than any other human being knows us.

We can't hide anything from God.

These are some of the words spoken by the Psalmist in the first three verses of Psalm 139 :-

<sup>1</sup> O Lord, you have searched me out and known me:

    you know when I sit or when I stand,  
    you comprehend my thoughts long before.

<sup>2</sup> You discern my path and the places where I rest:

    you are acquainted with all my ways.

<sup>3</sup> For there is not a word on my tongue:

    but you, Lord, know it altogether.

In the reading from John's Gospel today, we hear how shocked Nathanael is when he asks Jesus, "Where did you come to know me?" and Jesus replies, "I saw you under the fig tree before Philip called you."

### God loves us

Now, not only does God know all about us, but God loves us. We are God's creation and God longs for us. God is not a dispassionate creator, who created the world and then stands at a distance, as some deists may believe.

We are created by God and loved by God.

The Psalmist today also says:-

<sup>17</sup> How deep are your thoughts to me, O God:  
and how great is the sum of them!

<sup>18</sup> Were I to count them, they are more in number than the sand:  
were I to come to the end, I would still be with you.

So whilst it can be a bit scary that God knows all there is to know about us, we can be comforted by the fact that God loves us.

Ultimately, as Christians, we know God loves us, because God, who created all there is, chose to become one of us, in the person of Jesus. And not only did God become one of us, but he died on the cross so that we could be assured of forgiveness, and he rose from the dead to assure us of hope for the future.

We heard today how Philip and Nathanael found the Love of God in Jesus, and throughout the Gospels we see how people can't help but be drawn to Jesus.

### God wants a relationship with us

And we know that not only does God love us, but God wants to have a relationship with us.

In the reading from 1 Samuel today we hear how God keeps calling out to Samuel. Just because Samuel doesn't understand it is God in the first instance, God doesn't stop. God keeps calling Samuel until Eli helps him to understand it is God who is calling him, and God keeps calling.

Again, as Christians, God has provided us with an assurance that by accepting what Jesus has done for us, we can be in a secure relationship with God.

And Jesus didn't leave us alone after the resurrection and ascension, he promised the Holy Spirit to all who choose to follow him.

At its heart Christianity isn't a set of beliefs and moral instructions, but a relationship with God through Jesus. That is why our Diocesan Vision is: Transforming Lives through Jesus Christ.

### Our response

So, if we know, that God knows us intimately, God loves us and that God wants us to live in relationship with us, what does that mean for us.

Firstly I believe we should have a sense of awe and wonder about God. Can you remember the last time you were in awe and wonder at something.

Because we think we know so much about our world, I don't think this is a very common occurrence for us. I remember once when I was working as an engineer and I was in western Queensland visiting the sites for a number of floodway crossings we were tendering on. I was driving along a fence line, and I realized I couldn't see anything else around. I immediately stopped the ute, got out and jumped up onto the tray. As I scanned the horizon, I could see nothing but a track and a fence line in front, and a track and a fence line behind me. The vastness of the scene shocked me. I had been out west before and seen vast plains, but there had always been a tree in the distance or a hill, or a windmill. As I stood there I marvelled at the vastness of the place.

I wonder do we marvel at God like that. Do we look at Jesus like that. Jesus gave up everything, so that we could have a way to God.

When Nathanael acknowledged who Jesus was, because Jesus had seen him under the Fig Tree Jesus replied:-

'Do you believe because I told you that I saw you under the fig tree? You will see greater things than these.' <sup>51</sup> And he said to him, 'Very truly, I tell you, you will see heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man.'

So I believe we should have a sense of awe and wonder as we encounter with the Living God, that we know in Jesus. And in this sense of awe and wonder we should be drawn to following Jesus.

As I read the scriptures, it doesn't appear to me that any of those who chose to follow Jesus did so out of a sense of obligation or duty. They decide to follow Jesus because in him they saw the way to God.

### Conclusion

God knows us, God Loves us, God wants a relationship with us.

Have we acknowledged this in our lives and are we seeking to know God in the way we are living?