Reflection for Sunday 27 September 2020

What is your favourite Bible Story? Who is your favourite Bible Character? When did you first hear that story, or meet that character?

The Bible is a compilation of 66 different books, telling the story of the People of Israel, God's children throughout the generations. It tells the story of good people and bad people and what happens to them both. Some good people do bad things and some bad people do good things, and these are recorded to show that, as all human beings, we are flawed.

Certain characters lend themselves to musicals (for example, Joseph and his amazing technicolour dreamcoat); or to dramatic retellings (like Daniel in the Lion's Den); where others are more reflective and are easier to read than to portray (see Song of Songs). Artists can have a field day with all the graphic descriptions of visions and dreams and strange and wonderful creatures we hear of in, for example, Daniel and Revelation.

Love stories, War stories, Soap operas with family feuds, stories with happy endings and those with sad endings are all contained within this collection of books. Poetry, praise, lament, all covered too. Historians and scholars can even find lists of names and family genealogies in the pages of Chronicles and even the gospels

When did we last sit down to read a book of the Bible? When did we last look at a Bible when not in church? How often do we encourage others to open its pages and see what jumps out?

Reading opens up our minds to our imagination, to an infinite number of possibilities that cannot be portrayed on screen or in pictures. Each time a passage is read, something new is discovered – a new word, or passage that speaks to us that didn't seem to be there before. Chapters read together give a context that a short passage on a Sunday morning cannot.

I've always been a reader. Since being a child I am never happier than when my head is in a book. I want to encourage others to have that love of reading too. And reading the Bible should be on that list. It is a Holy book, not a Scary book. While its length may put some off, each individual book within the Bible provides for a long read or a short read depending on our mood or time constraints.

When children come in from schools to our local church, as an introduction to the Bible, I have them looking for their names in the list of books – we've had an Esther (who was thrilled to find out she was a queen!) and lots of John's and Mark's and Luke's. Not so many Isaiah's or Habakkuk's though! So much to discover if only we just look.

So I would encourage you all – if you love a good read, pick up your Bible. There is something in there for everyone and the Gospels tell a wonderful story of love lived out by Jesus and his disciples and shows us practical ways that we can do the same.

Happy Reading!

Rev Ruth