

Sunday Reflection 3rd January 2021.

John 1:1-18

¹In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²He was in the beginning with God. ³All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being ⁴in him was life, and the life was the light of all people.

⁵The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it. ⁶There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. ⁷He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. ⁸He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. ⁹The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. ¹⁰He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. ¹¹He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. ¹²But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, ¹³who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God. ¹⁴And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.

¹⁵(John testified to him and cried out, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me ranks ahead of me because he was before me.'") ¹⁶From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. ¹⁷The law indeed was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. ¹⁸No one has ever seen God. It is God the only Son, who is close to the Father's heart, who has made him known.

¹⁰He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him v.10

I am not very good at facial recognition and often Anita will ask me whilst watching a TV programme "do you recognise the actor?" "No" is the usual response. I am bad enough recognising someone I know out of context and if I have walked passed you or looked blank when speaking to you there may well be a simple reason. (Apparently there is a recognised medical condition – Prosopagnosia.)

Would we have recognised Jesus as being the Messiah if we had been in Capernaum or in other nearby towns and villages when Jesus walked the hillsides and through the streets amongst us? We might like to say yes but is that wishful thinking? To recognise Jesus in that way would have been to be part of a counter-culture society – would you have had the courage to be part of such a movement?

Is there a need for such a movement in today's society? Some of you might have been at Greenham Common amongst the campers; some may have been part of other social reform action groups in the past – or even in the present – which are not necessarily given public support.

To be a true follower of Jesus, recognising and knowing him, is to be part of a counter-cultural movement. In recent times has the Church in many parts of the world moulded itself into the culture of the surrounding community?

The start of this year the Methodist Church is encouraging its members to adopt a "Methodist Way of Life." If we had been gathering for worship in church buildings I would have started distributing booklets and commitment cards alongside the Covenant Service. This way of life is to build upon the call for the Church to become a "Mission Shaped Movement" as we all are called to deepen our discipleship with Jesus. As we learn to recognise Jesus more readily we are better equipped to discern the answer to the question; -

"What is God calling us "to do and to be" in this time?"

Are you good at recognising the voice and guidance of God amongst the noise and pulls of society?