

Wednesday 22nd July

Luke 8:1-3 Some Women Accompany Jesus

Soon afterwards he went on through cities and villages, proclaiming and bringing the good news of the kingdom of God. The twelve were with him, as well as some women who had been cured of evil spirits and infirmities: Mary, called Magdalene, from whom seven demons had gone out, and Joanna, the wife of Herod's steward Chuza, and Susanna, and many others, who provided for them out of their resources.

Jesus and his followers travelled about through the countryside, healing and driving out demons. Luke, who gives great attention to the role of women, tells us that many women who had been healed by Jesus came with them, and provided for Jesus and the disciples out of their own pockets.

On the whole people do not like to be dependant on others. During the first 5 years of my ministry I was working in the eastern valley in South Wales. On so many funeral visits I would hear from the family about the mum who would do anything to help a friend or neighbour but was fiercely independent. When they needed help they would not seek it.

Those who I knew who were alive, and like that I would try to persuade them that since they got pleasure from helping others it was now their turn to allow others pleasure from helping them.

People strive to be able to provide for themselves and feel uncomfortable if they can.

Jesus, the Son of God made wholly man, was dependent on these women for his needs.

There are many people in our Church congregations who are willing to do anything for God but are more reluctant to allow God to help them.

At the heart of our faith is allowing God to be God, a God who desires to express love to Creation. At the heart of the Gospel is Grace, salvation by grace through faith not salvation by works (Eph. 2:8-9).

The dependency of Jesus is vulnerable, loving and without self-interest. The women have received love and now give love in return, in a self-reinforcing cycle of mutual love and giving.

Alongside this is the message of Jesus that we should live by the principle of love - not the principle of survival that tells you that your safety lies in independence from others. The working out of our faith and Salvation in keeping the commandment of Jesus to love one another as he first loved us; that includes allowing others to love us

In this way, by allowing ourselves to be inter-dependent on the care of others we can be a gift to the world too.