

Connecting the Sunday Sparkle at Hearsall Baptist with the Daily Dust of Life

Welcome

Tell stories of when unexpected visitors arrived to see you... How did you respond?

Worship

Read this little poem aloud:

*God, whose love and joy
are present everywhere,
can't come to visit you
unless you aren't there.*

(Angelus Silesius, tr Stephen Mitchell in 'The Enlightened Heart'.)

- Give people a couple of minutes to ponder this.
- Then invite any reflections on what the poem might mean for you.

Word

Read Galatians 3: 23 - 25

- Paul regards the law as both a **jailer** and a **guardian**. Discuss how an observant 1st Century Jew might have responded to such ideas.
- The law was a badge of identity for a first century Jew. It reminded them of who they were and to whom they belonged. Both of the terms 'jailer' and 'guardian' suggest a route towards a better situation. What are those better situations? How do Christians receive a sense of identity and belonging?

Read Galatians 3: 26 - 28

A different way of belonging is explored further in these verses.

- Explore the idea of being clothed with Christ. What does that mean to you?
- How does your identity as an individual fit with your identity as a Christian?
- A sense of belonging in society is often based on race, gender or status. To what extent do these dividing lines still influence church life today?

- We transcend them (in theory at least) by being one in Christ Jesus. But doesn't this create another boundary line: Christian versus non-Christian? How can we ensure Christianity isn't just another sub-group of society? What else can it be?

Witness

Spend some time listening to a non-church friend this week. Without being artificial, have some deeper questions you might ask them, such as:

- What kind of things make you really happy?
- When do you feel most truly alive?
- Who or what takes your breath away?
- What's the most beautiful thing you've ever seen?
- What makes you really angry?
- If you were the next Prime Minister, what would be your priority in the first week of office?

Reflect later, or possibly with them, about any overlap between their answers to these sorts of questions and your own.