

BBC Essex Reflection

Sunday 15th April 2018



Good morning,

There is a story of our Queen who some years ago was visiting her daughter Anne, the Princess Royal, in Gloucestershire and on the way home to Windsor late at night her car and escorts got caught in a snowstorm and she had to spend the night in a country hotel. One can just imagine the conversation between the royal protection officer and the hotel manager. "I need two rooms; one guest is her Majesty Queen Elizabeth!" "Oh yes, and I'm the Queen of Sheba!" Once the hotel manager had got over the shock he would have had to show the Queen to a room as it was. If he had known the Queen was going to spend the night there he would have given it the full treatment of flowers, new linen and so on. But the Queen had to take the room as it was, without being smartened up for a Royal visit.

I was also reminded of a story of St George's church in Leeds which runs a homeless shelter in the crypt beneath the main church. One of the regulars eventually became a sort of caretaker and came to a faith in Jesus Christ. He was asked to take something into the main church. "Oh no" he said, "I can never go into a proper church-not after what I have done!" The manager said, "God accepts all people, whatever they have done as long as they say sorry and believe in Jesus as their saviour. God wants you just to come into His house just as you are."

In our churches we are now in the Easter season and in our gospel readings we are hearing about the resurrection appearances. What is remarkable about all of them is that Jesus met people where they were; not when they had got themselves together and 'cleaned up their act.'

- Mary Magdalene was met by Jesus in the middle of her grief.
- Those leaving Jerusalem on the road to Emmaus were met by Jesus in the middle of their depression.
- Peter and his friends were met by Jesus in the middle of their guilt at having abandoned him.
- Thomas was met by Jesus in the middle of his doubts.

I wonder if the reason that some of us do not come to Jesus for help is because we think he will not like us as we really are, and we think that we have to get our act together before he can accept us. In fact the opposite is true, we have to 'come as we are' in the middle of our problems, and ask God to accept us, help us and begin to change us.

The hotel manager had to let the Queen into her room as it was. How much more should we let Jesus, the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords, into our hearts now, today as we are. He promises only to love us and accept us and give us new life and hope in Him.

As the hymn puts it:

**Just as I am without one plea,
But that thy blood was shed for me,
And that thou bidst me come to thee,
Oh Lamb of God, I come.**