

## Lent Reflection Week 4 Signs...

*John 2.18-22- The Jews then said to him, "What sign can you show us for doing this?" Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." The Jews then said, "This temple has been under construction for forty-six years, and will you raise it up in three days?" But he was speaking of the temple of his body. After he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this; and they believed the scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken.*

Reflection- It's not uncommon for Jesus and the Jewish leaders, or the disciples to be speaking about conflicting ideas within the same conversation. Here the Jewish leaders want a sign to justify Jesus' behaviour and he tells them that the temple will be raised up in three days, referring to himself. But the Jews understand... or rather don't understand him to be speaking about the physical temple building.

We are in the fortunate position that the writer of John's gospel is in: we have hindsight! John's gospel states that Jesus was speaking about his body and after he was raised from the dead they remembered... We know the end of the Lent story, we know that Jesus dies, conquers death and rises again. But the Jews didn't know that yet... so they're asking for a sign, an explanation... a reason for Jesus behaviour. He does give them one- he tells them that he is the new temple... No longer will God dwell separate to his people but he is present with them in Jesus.

We don't know the end of our own stories. We don't know when we will be able to worship "normally again" nor do we know how those around us will react to the presence of God in their lives... Our non-believing friends, family, children, neighbours... they may come to know God themselves in the weeks and months ahead. Or they may not. Our economy and political system may shift... it may not... we don't know. If the last 12 months have taught us anything it is that change can come very unexpectedly. We live in uncertain times. Therefore, I think we can be forgiven for asking for a sign from God sometimes. We should not test God but to seek reassurance is always understandable.

I wonder if you recognise specific things as a sign from God? This could be seeing a certain bird or hearing a certain song. But I'm not necessarily speaking of specifics... I'm more meaning do we open ourselves to the idea that God speaks to us through the world around us? The great joy for us as Christians is the God is NOT separated from His people. But the Holy Spirit is active and working in the world around us. The Kingdom of God is breaking through into our world... we just need to be aware and watchful for it. Where we see truth, or love, where something is beautiful, where hope is inspired... there we see God working in the world. May we ever be watchful in our uncertainty for the signs of God's presence in our lives. Amen.