

“But what does it matter?” writes Paul. “The important thing is that in every way, whether from false motives or true, Christ is preached. And because of this I rejoice. Yes and I will continue to rejoice. . .” *Philippians 1:15-18*.

Cam Peak, a local hill to Dursley and Cam, has just had a hair cut! In reality, this years bracken has been cut back to reveal the real shape and contours of the hill. Equally I’ve realised I live under the flight path of some of Slimbridge’s feathered guests. Sometimes they are in a classic “V” formation and other times they are in segments of it, but you still know they are geese. And there is no doubt, that we live in a beautiful area, as the leaves of the trees turn from green to golden declaring the beauty of creation and pointing back to Creator God.

Each of these illustrations reveal a true identity.

In his book called “We make the road by walking” Brian McLaren explores the true identity of those who call themselves Christians, focussing on discipleship and how we walk the journey of faith together. I don’t think I need to tell you that we are all parts of the same body with different roles and functions, or that we are called to love God and love our neighbour.

I can see in the work and activities that you are doing that you understand this.

So much good work is done in and through our churches, driven, not by selfish desires but rather by love of those in need in our communities. I recognise the spirit that is behind it, the desire to love our neighbours, to serve those in need. And this work should continue and grow.

I believe we also need to prayerfully discover what our church identities are, how we can be intentional in what we do and how we encourage each other in discipleship.

How do we hold Jesus at the centre of what we do as church and community? How do we pray both in church and our communities for people to come to know Jesus? How do we make our activities clearly and visibly Christ centred to those who join in with them?

We all are called to ministry, to share the Good News in what we do and say. It is our calling to pray for others, to bless others, to serve others, to welcome others – all in the name of Jesus Christ our risen saviour and in the power of the Holy Spirit.

My challenge for each and everyone of us is to do just that. To name Jesus as Lord and the motivation behind what we are doing. It doesn’t need to be amazing, extraordinary missional activity rather amazing ordinary activity that names and places Christ at the centre. A prayer at Tuesday drop-in coffee mornings and Wednesday’s Tea and Talk, praying for our communities on our daily walks, saying grace at community meals, and welcoming people into the building in the name of Christ.

It is in the small things, the little acts of kindness and generosity done in and through the name of Jesus that we will show others our identity, intentionality and love of Christ.