

Saint Michael and All Angels Parish Church, Bramcote



Tuesday, 20th July 2021

Bible Readings: [Psalm 5; Ezekiel 18:1-20; 2 Corinthians 11:16-end](#)
(Each reading may be viewed at www.biblegateway.com)

Reflection: ②

The passage from Ezekiel gives us God's side of an argument between him and the people of Judah, who were at that time in exile in Babylon. God quotes an old proverb, "The parents eat sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge", which they were using to put the blame for their predicament firmly on the actions and failings of previous generations, rather than on their own behaviour. Of course, the Babylonian exile came about as a result of many generations of people failing to take notice of God's laws, but by using this proverb the people were not facing up to their own shortcomings and taking responsibility for their own actions.

God makes it quite clear that every life is valuable to him, that every individual belongs to him and will be judged by him on their own merits. It is true that in ancient Israel there was a very strong sense of community life, community responsibility, as the covenant relationship was between God and the people as a whole. But each person within that community had a responsibility for his or her own behaviour, and that is what God will base his judgement on. He gives three examples: a righteous father on whom he will look favourably; the father's wicked son who will have to answer to God for his evil ways; and the wicked man's righteous son, who having seen his father's way of life, decides to take a different path. God says that each of these will be judged by his own actions, not by those of his father or son.

Of course people do suffer as a result of the life choices made by previous generations, but this chapter of Ezekiel makes it clear that it is not inevitable - each person has the possibility of answering God's call and entering into a relationship of faith and trust with him, thus breaking the cycle. May each of us respond wisely to God's call.

Prayer:

O God you made us and you love us; thank you for being so willing to forgive us: make us quick to own up to you whenever we do wrong, so that we may quickly be forgiven; then our day will not be spoilt by worry, and we shall live in your peace. through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

"Cast all your anxiety on him, because he cares for you." 1 Peter 5.7