

Chat with the Children

- Talk about lenses, and how they alter our perception without changing reality
 - allow us to see things we couldn't otherwise see
 - examples: binoculars, telescopes, camera lenses, microscopes, glasses...
 - try and get some folk to use different lenses and see what they can see?
- Way we understand the world around us can be changed too:
 - fall in love and the whole world seems beautiful!?
 - Jesus told stories that help us understand God and the world in new ways
 - beginning a series on some of these stories, or parables, that help us see the world differently...

Introduction

- Words/names sometimes communicate or carry something of how we think of people:
 - I didn't know my grandfather well - he died when I was about 7 or 8
 - I do have some memories, as he came and lived with us for a few months before he had to move into a nursing home shortly before he died
 - but my memories, my sense of who he was as a person are largely coloured and shaped by how my mum talked of him
 - he was "Papa", and even that word now for me brings a whole impression, a picture of a person
 - he was a brass founder - my mum had a number of things he'd made, including his apprentice piece - a big man for his generation, physically strong - another personal memory is visiting my uncle's house in Elie as it was being built - my Papa was working on the site, digging or brick-laying or something...
 - but perhaps most of all he was a man of deep faith, of Christian maturity, a leading figure in the Baptist church of which he was a part in Whiteinch in Glasgow, a man of personal devotion and prayerfulness, a man who led his family by example
 - he'd left his mark quite profoundly on my mum, who very clearly loved, admired, respected, honoured him...
 - though I never knew him as an adult, never had a developed personal sense of who he was, **to me that's my Papa...**
- I know that's the lens through which I see my Papa...
 - **through what lens do we see God?**
 - Jesus came telling stories, parables, which were often designed to help us see things differently
 - our lens on God may come from the words that are used - father/our own experience of a human father
 - our lens on God may come from our church heritage - the way a church community lived and treated each other will have shaped our sense of God
 - the particular Scriptures emphasised, the stories told and retold, will colour what we think important
 - **(incidentally, this is one reason why its really helpful to be reading the Bible yourself, and not just depending on what is preached...)**

Exegesis

- Go through the story, talking about what is being implied along the way:
 - what the son says in taking the inheritance - **I wish you were dead**
 - who he good guy is - the son who stays at home
 - what shame the son brings on the family in cavorting with prostitutes
 - the expectations of how a father would receive back such a son - possibility of a **Kezazeh**, a cutting off of one not yet dead, like a funeral, marking total ostracism by the whole (village) community

Luke 15:11-32 Through a Different Lens: Papa Fintry, 10/10/2010, am

- but even the fact the father was watching is significant!
 - running... lifting his robe... willing to be publically humiliated out of love for his son; the unconditional nature of the grace offered
 - robe - probably the father's - signet ring, for signing legal documents (given history of taking property!)
 - the exuberant joyfulness of the home-coming
 - how this would have been heard by the elder son, all his expectations
 - in particular expectation of elder son being one to intercede between father and younger son, sort out the family feud...
 - danger of becoming a prodigal in the pews...?
- All shaping the picture of who God is, and how he loves us
 - is this our picture of God?

And they all lived....?

- *Conclusion* - see end of Jeff Lucas book notes, "Prodigal Friendly Church"
- *What happened to the big brother?*
 - we don't know!
 - did his view of his own father, of what was acceptable for him to do, change and adapt to the reality of his father's love?
 - or did he become in his own way a prodigal, estranged from his father?
 - *through which lens will we view God?*