

Chat with the Children

- Crossing the road
 - go through how you would do it, where you would stand, what you would look out for
- If you try crossing road with view obstructed by cars - dangerous
 - but get somewhere you can see clearly and it is much safer...
- Thinking about seeing from God's perspective - a much safer and clearer way to look at life
 - like "I'm not very important" or "I am chosen by God!"

Introduction

- Nietzsche (1844-1900)... graffiti on a wall:
 - "God is dead", signed Friedrich Nietzsche (1888)
 - below that, "Nietzsche is dead", signed God... (1901)

The Fool's View

- The point of perspective for the fool, their starting point, is "there is no God"
- And what David is doing is connecting the "there is no God" to the moral consequences:
 - if this is the way you see the world, start your living in the world, then corruption, vile deeds, the opposite of doing good is what will follow
 - things that made the West great programme on TV - one was Christianity, because it gave rise to integrity, trust, promise keeping - good business values that work for the good of the whole society and not selfishly for my good...
 - recognised as such by some public thinkers in China, of all places!
- General observation, to which there may be specific exceptions or apparent exceptions:
 - we perhaps all know decent atheists, or can think of some in the public sphere...
 - but here is the generalisation - without a divinely inspired perspective on life, behaviour and the society shaped by that behaviour will crumble

Our perspective

- Are we, in any or every area of life, saying there is no God?
 - (explain how we could be saying "there is no God" by excluding him from a particular area, from our relational behaviour, from our anger management, from our relaxation, from our sexual behaviour....)

The Lord's View

- From God's perspective - with a view from heaven - things look a little different:
 - he can see where starting in the wrong place will lead you...
 - (map illustration; if you get your starting point wrong, then you will end up in the wrong place - going down the A1, ended up on the M1? Nottingham was in the wrong place...)
- Since God exists, rejecting him is folly
 - something big and important sneaking up behind us which we shouldn't ignore?
 - Gibbs being right behind people on his team of detectives when they are talking about him...
 - language is of moral failure, rejection and corruption
- With the clarity of a heavenly viewpoint we move beyond the generalisation (with exceptions) to certainty:
 - life without God does not result in good

- because God sees ultimate consequences, the path that rejecting him leads us down, the trajectory....

Our perspective

- Are we beginning to let God's perspective, on who we are, on the world we live in, on how we are to live, shape how we see things?

A Covenant View

- Where is the Psalmist looking at all this from?
 - he is not in the fool's shoes - he knows and worships and follows God
 - he is not in God's shoes, clearly!
 - he has, however, been included by God in the covenant, into the community of faith - he is a believer
 - so fear of the future, and in particular of God's coming judgement (v.5) is gone
 - so purpose and refuge pervade life, even when things are tough - because they take place within the context of a family relationship with God, which gives hope for the future (v.6)
 - and looking on, he can see something of the peril the fool, the evil-doer, the God-rejecter stands in, "who do not call on the Lord" (v.4)

Our perspective

- Do we see ourselves as God's children, secure in our relationship with Him
 - as we talked with the children, do we think of ourselves as unimportant, or as chosen children?
 - as not good enough, or those saved by grace?
 - as unable to share our faith, or those who don't need to worry about what to say when asked about Jesus and our faith (Mark 13:11), its the Holy Spirit speaking through us...
 - as those unable to change, or as able to be transformed by the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit (Romans 12:2)

A Kingdom View

- *Finishes not with an "I'm alright Jack" conclusion, but a desire for a change in perspective for those who do not yet see...*

"Story"

- A local priest and a pastor were fishing on the side of the road. They thoughtfully made a sign saying, "The end is near! Turn yourself around now before it's too late!" and showed it to each passing car.
 - One driver who drove by didn't appreciate the sign and shouted at them, "Leave us alone, you religious nuts!"
 - All of a sudden they heard a big splash, looked at each other, and the priest said to the pastor, "You think maybe we should have just said 'Bridge Out' instead?"
- Will we, who have been welcomed into God's covenant, who see things from a new perspective, commit ourselves, give focus to our faith, to seeing the Kingdom come?