

Queen's 90th sermon – her example of Faith, Fortitude and Forgiveness

12th June 2016 – Charlie Boyle

10 things we know about the Queen

1. She is 90 this year
2. She employs 1200 people but feeds her own dogs
3. She was a Girl Guide
4. She was the 1st monarch to know how to mend a car engine
5. She writes a diary every night
6. She is the longest serving monarch
7. She is Patron of the Scouting movement
8. She works even in her 90th year for more than 40 hours a week
9. She has advised 12 Prime Ministers from Winston Churchill..
10. She has broadcast 63 Christmas messages, often mentioning Jesus...

However there are many things we don't know about the Queen, she met with Margaret Thatcher every week for 11 years but no one really knows what she thought of her. Or of Tony Blair or of much of the detail of the conversation with her ...Prime Ministers and the conversations she has had with them every week since she began her reign.

In an age when we publish so much about ourselves on the Internet via social media, Facebook, ...Twitter, from what we had for breakfast, where we had lunch and with whom to what beautiful sunset or view we might be enjoying, the Queen might have many strongly held opinions on many subjects but we don't know what they are. For example she never told the Scottish people how to vote in the referendum last year and has said nothing publicly about whether we should stay in the EU or not. Yet there is one thing she not afraid of speaking about publicly and THAT IS HER FAITH IN JESUS.

Faith

The Queen relies on her faith. It helps her to remain strong as she serves God and her people. In her Christmas message of 2002, she said:

I know just how much I rely on my faith to guide me through the good times and the bad. Each day is a new beginning. I know that the only way to live my life is to try to do what is right, to take the long view, my to give of my best in

all that the day brings and to put my trust in God. ...not unlike the Scouting promise...

- She is Uncharacteristically open about what she believes
- Queen's broadcasts on Christmas Day...where she speaks of Jesus Christ as an "inspiration", a role model, an anchor.
- Wears her faith on her sleeve

NOW WHO HAS SOME MONEY IN THEIR POCKET, MORE PARTICULARLY A COIN ON THEM?

DEF / FD

ANYONE KNOW WHAT IT MEANS?

Title used by all kings and queens of England since the 16th century. The abbreviation of the title's Latin form, Fidei Defensor, is FD or FID DEF, and this appears on every British coin. The title was first given to King Henry VIII by Pope Leo X after Henry's defence of the Roman Catholic faith against the teachings of Martin Luther. But the title was taken away when England left the Roman Catholic Church. King Henry then asked the English Parliament to give him the same title with a different meaning: defender of the Church of England.

SO THE QUEEN IS BOTH A DEFENDER OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH BOTH PUBLICLY AND PRIVATELY

SECONDLY

Fortitude

Fortitude - What do you do when times are tough? Where do you turn?

The Queen has seen tough times during her life, she saw her **father** take on a job he would rather not have done,

grow ill under the strain of work

and die young at 56.

More recently she suffered the deaths of her mother and sister in the same year, and of course anyone who has experienced grief knows that to experience grief is something we all have to face but we cannot choose when and how intense it is.

- Then of course there was her Annus Horribilis, 1992, a year during which Prince Andrew announced his separation from his wife, Sarah, Princess Anne divorced her husband and Princess Diana revealed her unhappiness

of her marriage to Prince Charles, oh and of course a large part of Windsor Castle just happened to go up in flames...

- But then she did have a few other residences stay in!
- What was her response? Who did she turn to?
- It was to mention the importance of prayer and the gratitude and support of the prayers of others, saying in the Lord Mayor's speech *thank you for those prayers – fervent I hope but not too frequent – that have sustained me through all these years.*
- Prayer – talking and listening to God brings both perspective and strength and leads to a renewed sense of God's love and care.

Her fortitude and faith are founded on a strong prayer life along with a regular attendance, to church every Sunday, regardless of where she is, whether on holiday or not.

CERTAINLY ONE OF THE MOST RECENT AND POPULAR EXPRESSIONS OF THIS FORTITUDE IS THE PHRASE AND SAYING

- ***Keep Calm and Carry on....*** Although the Queen did not perhaps invent this phrase, she certainly embodies it and I'm sure her faith and fortitude in Christ, very much support my third F – forgiveness.

Forgiveness

- The Queen has worked hard for peace and reconciliation all her life, particularly in her work to foster strong relationships within the Commonwealth, in her work to heal divisions between Protestants and Catholics and between the United Kingdom and Ireland.
- In this she showed great courage and generosity of heart, especially as Prince Philip her husband was brought up by Earl Mountbatten, second cousin to the Queen, who was assassinated by the IRA as a result of a bomb on a boat, in 1979, probably one of my early is to memories of the atrocities in Northern Ireland. She made successful state visit to the Republic of Ireland in 2011. Northern Ireland – the Queen in visiting Northern Ireland in demonstrated publicly how important forgiveness,
- more broadly the Queen was the first British monarch to meet the Pope since Reformation..

Quote: In her Christmas broadcast of 1984 she said that *“the life of Jesus Christ, the Prince of peace, is an inspiration and an anchor in my life. A role model of reconciliation and forgiveness, he stretched out his hands in love*

acceptance and healing. Christ's example has taught me to seek, to respect and value all people of whatever faith or none."

Indeed the Queen's strong faith in Christ does not lead her to exclude people of other faiths but rather to embrace them, to accord them the same respect and dignity she does to those who share her beliefs.

As she said, as the supreme Governor of the Church of England, to faith leaders of the United Kingdom at Lambeth Palace in 2012:-

the concept of our established church is occasionally misunderstood and, I believe, commonly underappreciated. Its role is not to defend Anglicanism to the exclusion of other religions. Instead, the church has a duty to protect the free practice of all faiths in this country. It certainly provides an identity and spiritual dimension for its own many adherents. But also, gently and assuredly the Church of England has created an environment for other faith communities and indeed people of no faith to live freely. Woven into the fabric of this country, the church has helped to build a better society more and more in active cooperation for the common good with those of other faiths.

And this is all part of her understanding of what it means to love your neighbour.

Forgiveness lies at the heart of our Christian faith. It can heal broken families, it can restore friendships and it can reconcile divided communities. It is in forgiveness that we feel the power of God's love.

As it says in our passage from Matthew today:-

Lord how many times shall I forgive my brother when ...seventy seven....v.35

Remember that good spreads outwards and every little does help. Mighty things from small beginnings grow as indeed they grew from a small child of Bethlehem.

Response/challenge:-

So what could you start as a small thing today? That could lead to great things? Is there someone you need to say sorry to? Is there a seed of hope/reconciliation/encouragement that you could water regularly?

We are now going to have our next song during which everyone is going to have the opportunity to come forward to place their offering in the collection and also to pick up a copy of ***The Servant Queen and the King she serves***...on which much of this sermon is based and taken from.

I will just end this talk by quoted by Richard Attenborough, at the Thanksgiving service on Friday, at St Paul's from Louise Haskins poem

God Knows

And I said to the man who stood at the gate of the year:

"Give me a light that I may tread safely into the unknown."

And he replied:

"Go out into the darkness and put your hand into the Hand of God.

That shall be to you better than light and safer than a known way."

So I went forth, and finding the Hand of God, trod gladly into the night.

And He led me towards the hills and the breaking of day in the lone East.