

**Sermon Summary**  
**2<sup>nd</sup> after Epiphany**  
**15<sup>th</sup> January 2012**

- In different ways, 1 Cor 6:12-20 and John 1:51 point to shortcomings in our reading of Scripture.
- The content of 1 Cor 6: 12-20 may embarrass us, or strike us as irrelevant- and mean that we fail to take account of the principle which the bulk of this passage serves to illustrate.
- John 1:51 presents a different problem. It provides a powerful picture image, familiar from Jacob's Ladder (Genesis 28) as well. It's a standard in Sunday School colouring and children's illustrated bibles.
- The shared problem is that both make Scripture appear to connect: the first, because of embarrassment or irrelevance, the second because it keeps our faith trapped in childhood. It fails to grow with us, and gradually the gap between life and faith becomes so large that faith is seen as childish (not child-like), immature and redundant.
- Two different strategies are needed to ensure the continued value of Scripture as a guide for life and faith.
- First, with regard to 1 Cor 6:12-20, we need to look at the principle which is being put forward. It is this: that there is more to living a good life than just "keeping the law". We need to consider what is beneficial to us. Paul reminds us that morality and legal duty are not the same, and suggests that we need to live, not just by what is legal, but by what is helpful to our growth and identity.
- Second, in John 1:51, Jesus is making a promise to Nathanael. That striking visual image is promise that the one who follows Jesus will be given insights in to the way of the world.
- This goes far beyond scientific empiricism which is often good at telling us how things work (cause and effect & the like), but WHY the world is the way it is. Good scientists admit that their methods cannot measure many of these WHY questions: they are the wrong tools for such a job. Theology with its claims to deal with questions about the meaning of life, and how it should be lived attempts to answers these questions. As such it complements rather than competes with science, and offers answers that good science admits it could never give.
- Discipleship, which is a kind of theology, is a lifelong engagement with these issues, and we can never put up our feet and say that our task is done.

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