

## Seeing Through a Glass Darkly

9 December 2018

Sermon for Remembrance Service

Reading: 1 Corinthians 13:12 ff

When our daughter Rebecca was growing up she came to me with a very sensible question. “When you were young Dad was the world in black and white?” She had seen old films and old news items on TV and everything was in black and white. So, logically, she thought the whole world was in black and white. I explained that it was because we didn’t have the technology to record things in anything but black and white, that the world was full of colour but we just couldn’t see it on TV.

Tonight we gather to remember those who have died. It's an important occasion because when we come to Christmas it is a time when we feel most keenly the loss of different ones around the table. So that it doesn't creep up on us and catch us unawares we have this service to give thanks for these loved ones and to help us on the grief journey.

St Paul writing to the fledgling Christian community in Corinth (and to us thanks to the Bible) uses the image of seeing through a glass darkly. Mirrors and lenses weren't great in Paul's day and to look through glass would have been to only see the image in shadows. Like Rebecca and the black and white TV.

For us we can only grasp what the next life will be through a glass darkly. We know for sure that there is a next life because Jesus has risen from the dead and returned to tell us. But we can’t be sure about the details.

One thing we know is that there is going to be a more fully developed relationship with God. The love we enjoy with God now will grow and develop. Compared with the life we have now with all its compromise and suffering the next life will be in full technicolour - life in all its fullness.

I can remember when Mum and Dad got our first colour TV. The year was 1977 and Robert Muldoon paid for it. Well that was what Dad told me. I wasn't sure who Robert Muldoon was but if he was buying us a TV then he must be a great man. It cost a thousand dollars. It wasn't fair to compare it to what went before. It was so much better. The sound was better, the picture was magic, and it didn't take any time to warm up at all. It was made by someone called Sanyo. The old one had been made by a Mr Pye.

It is hard to let our loved ones go. And we never really get over the pain of their loss. There is no such thing as closure, just a gentler grieving.

But as we do let them go, we do it safe in the knowledge that what God has in store for them is much better than what we enjoy now. For now we see through a glass darkly but then we shall see face to face.