

Sunday theme – **Searching for God****Read Psalm 29**

1. We Christians are blessed that we know God as the Creator, and marvel at so much beauty and the intricacy of his creation all around; there both for a sustaining purpose and to provide witness of his work. Of course, it is easy to sometimes take all this for granted and see God's handiwork without offering up our praise and gratitude.

1a. Look around the room where you have gathered. What can you see that reminds you of God the Creator?

1b. Can you identify some of the unseen things also present in the room? Is this also God's handiwork?

1c. Can you say how different a view would be of the room and its contents from someone who does not believe in a Creator God?

2. Christians also understand God to be the sustainer of all life and the universe. He first created, and now by his power, sustains that creation. He provides every breathe we take.

2a. Secular people are quick to point out that lots of things (eg millions dying of starvation, climate change, deforestation, extinction of animal species) are not being sustained by God and appear to be out of his control. How would you respond?

2b. What role, if any, does humanity have in the sustaining of life and the universe?

3. Having thought about God as creator and sustainer, lets pause to give thought to what one is left to believe in if there is no God. I'm quoting a challenge from a Wayne Grudem book.

3a. Just try to imagine for a moment that you believe that there is no God and that you are just the product of matter plus time plus chance, the spontaneous result of random variation in organisms over millions of years. How would you feel differently about yourself? About other people? About the future? About right and wrong?

**Read Mark 1: 1 - 13**

4. John came preaching a need for baptism for the forgiveness of sins. The Jewish people of that time required Gentile converts to repent and be baptised in order to become 'Jewish' and worshippers of the true God, but their traditional teaching was that repentance/baptism was not required of themselves as they belonged to God's chosen people simply by being born a Jew.

4a. What parallels, if any, of that traditional view do you see within the general public of Britain today with regard to being a Christian?

4b. Are the (non- church attending) parents today, when asking for their child to be baptised, searching for God? If so, are they searching for themselves or on behalf of their child?

4c. If a 'seeker' approaches our church (by any number of ways), how many different ways do we currently have to respond and help them? Can you think of any ways we currently do not offer?

(Bible used = NIV 2011 translation)

*St James Church, Taunton – Roger Fenton – 2018*