

5th September

Well what a strange week, schools re-opened but not the normal buzz of the start of term, more a worry of are they safe and will there be another spike in the virus.

I watched at the window at work as the children I had been caring for went into reception for the first time, parents unable to support them past the gate, happily they all seemed to cope well and as they left had smiles on their faces. My job with them is done I hope we have set them off well in school life.

Then today David and I had lunch with friends whom we should have gone on holiday to Malta with in March but Covid 19 got in the way. It was very strange seeing them for the first time since January but we were soon back chatting and catching up on life. A lovely afternoon. Nice to get just a little bit of normality and social contact again.

So back to my thoughts.

I enclose two photos taken last week on a walk I did with dad (Allen Burton) we walked from Mallastang up to the water cut and over the fells to Cotters end. We took a picnic and had a lovely day walking taking in the views and chatting. We even managed our quickest ascent to the monument getting to there in 35minutes! Well done dad after been so ill earlier in the year.

We debated were the source of the river Eden is, as some say up hells- gill and others say in a bog area behind Aisgill cottages, still not sure really, but its up there somewhere. It was so peaceful and quiet, a few sheep and odd walkers and a couple of mountain bikers.

Back to the photos, both show the water cut monument but very differently. One has the view narrowly between the curves which is beautiful and the other a full view down the Eden valley.

It had me thinking how do we approach life, do we have a narrow agenda and narrow path, doing the same all the time, making sure things are done as we see fit and have always done or do we look at the wider picture and see things that may be off the beaten track , or that may be out of our comfort zone and try to challenge ourselves.

Life is often made up of both, plodding along following the path but then occasionally seeing a need and taking in the wider view and trying in some way to support or help a need. I like to think that each of us in some way has helped a friend or a neighbour when they have been in need, but have

we ever widened our eyes and tried to help a bigger need? Not that we can solve or help everyone but offering a prayer can help.

At the circuit meeting last week , Which was held in Appleby Chapel a real moment to be back with friends in a place of worship, Anne talked about how during the pandemic of Covid the food bank had seen a need and had changed how they do things to support 62 needy children in the area. What an achievement by looking wider.

Then seeing how the Heart of Westmorland you tube services that have been held during the pandemic had reached up to 400 people who would not of perhaps thought of entering a place of worship. People looked wider to see how we could still worship without a building and look at the impact. Going back many years I remember the impact of the billy Graham events at football stadiums, I had the pleasure of going to Anfield at Liverpool to hear and see him. What an impact he had by looking wider than his normal path.

I am not saying we should all aim to do huge things but we should all try and look wide for people who may need a helping hand and step out of our comfort zone occasionally to try something new. The view may be huge but there is beauty to be seen in everything.

We used to sing at Sunday school,

Wide, wide as the ocean, high as the heaven above;
Deep, deep as the deepest sea is my Savior's love.
I, though so unworthy, still am a child of His care;
For His Word teaches me that His love reaches me everywhere.

Remember his love is everywhere and for everyone.

Matthew ch 7 v 13-14

“enter through the narrow gate, for wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only few find it”

Let us try and look wide to bring more people onto the path of life with our lord, don't walk it alone, bring in friends.