

More on Perspectives

I was interested to read Merle's reflection on Dartmeet and the response 'Perspectives'. Last Friday I drove from the North East of England, where I live, across the Pennines at Blubberhouses to Blackburn in Lancashire. It was a beautiful day, bright and sunny and the horizon was crystal clear. The views of the hills and the descent into the Ribble Valley were spectacular and it was a thoroughly enjoyable drive. When I left Blackburn on Monday it was dull and grey and the hills merged into the mist making the horizon indistinguishable. What a contrast! The drive home was harder, the traffic moved slower and the road had to be viewed through windscreen wipers.

As I drove I thought that it provided a good analogy for the way we feel about, and present ourselves, as well as the way we view others. When we understand ourselves well, know how we operate and share our lives and our feelings with others on an ongoing basis, we can see who we are quite clearly, can appreciate all that the Lord has put within us, use it to benefit others and enjoy being the people God created us to be. However, there are times when we struggle, when circumstances overwhelm us and we don't respond well or we simply don't know or understand ourselves or others well. This can obscure the beauty of God's life within us, make us less attractive to others and less effective in God's service.

I was starkly aware of that contrast over the weekend. I had travelled to Blackburn, where I had lived for many years, for a reunion party and met up with a group of friends, many of whom I had not seen for nearly 10 years. It was a joy to meet up again and catch up on everyone's news – lots of talking late into the night! As I thought about the different stories and life experiences we shared, for most a mixture of good times but also some difficult and painful times, 2 things in particular struck me. The first was that it was not so much the experiences themselves that had shaped and moulded us but the way we had responded to them and whether we had used the difficult times in our lives to grow as people and in our relationships with others and with the Lord. The second thing that struck me as I listened to various stories and recounted my own experiences was just how faithful our God is.

Julie