



Sunday, 26 July, 2020

Trinity 7

Lord of all power and might,
 the author and giver of all good things:
 graft in our hearts the love of your name,
 increase in us true religion,
 nourish us with all goodness,
 and of your great mercy keep us in the same;
 through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
 who is alive and reigns with you,
 in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
 one God, now and for ever.
 Amen.

First Reading (Genesis 29:15-28)

Then Laban said to Jacob, ‘Because you are my kinsman, should you therefore serve me for nothing? Tell me, what shall your wages be?’ Now Laban had two daughters; the name of the elder was Leah, and the name of the younger was Rachel. Leah’s eyes were lovely, and Rachel was graceful and beautiful. Jacob loved Rachel; so he said, ‘I will serve you seven years for your younger daughter Rachel.’ Laban said, ‘It is better that I give her to you than that I should give her to any other man; stay with me.’ So Jacob served seven years for Rachel, and they seemed to him but a few days because of the love he had for her.

Then Jacob said to Laban, ‘Give me my wife that I may go in to her, for my time is completed.’ So Laban gathered together all the people of the place, and made a feast. But in the evening he took his daughter Leah

and brought her to Jacob; and he went in to her. (Laban gave his maid Zilpah to his daughter Leah to be her maid.) When morning came, it was Leah! And Jacob said to Laban, ‘What is this you have done to me? Did I not serve with you for Rachel? Why then have you deceived me?’ Laban said, ‘This is not done in our country—giving the younger before the firstborn. Complete the week of this one, and we will give you the other also in return for serving me for another seven years.’ Jacob did so, and completed her week; then Laban gave him his daughter Rachel as a wife.

Gospel Reading (Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52)

He put before them another parable: ‘The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in his field; it is the smallest of all the seeds, but when it has grown it is the greatest of shrubs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches.’

He told them another parable: ‘The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed in with three measures of flour until all of it was leavened.’

‘The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which someone found and hid; then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.

‘Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls; on finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had and bought it.

‘Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was thrown into the sea and caught fish of every kind; when it was full, they drew it ashore, sat down, and put the good into baskets but threw out the bad. So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come out and separate the evil from the righteous and throw them into the furnace of fire, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

'Have you understood all this?' They answered, 'Yes.' And he said to them, 'Therefore every scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like the master of a household who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old.'

Reflection for the Fifth Sunday after Trinity

Mark Wild

(Reader, WWRT)

Hello, my name is Mark Wild and I am a Reader in the Worcestershire West Rural Team.

The parables contained in this morning's reading taken from Matthew's gospel, whilst explaining something of the Kingdom of God, fall into three categories.

The first indicates that even something that starts out small, yeast in a bread dough mix and a mustard seed, will grow into something large which will have a far greater influence on the world around them, than anyone would have been thought possible, if they had never seen the final result.

The second, is an indication of the response that someone will have to realising who Jesus is and how important he is to the rest of their lives.

And the third, reinforces an earlier passage, that warns everyone, that there will be a time of sorting of the people into those God deems to be worth keeping and those who are not.

A few years ago, I started to get into bread making. I am not talking about just putting the ingredients into a machine and switching it on, although that was a start, I am talking about putting the ingredients into a bowl mixing them together, working the dough, leaving it to prove, reshaping it and finally baking it.

To do this successfully you need to have a good idea of what is happening during each stage of the process.

I also started to look not only at recipes, but also techniques.

By doing this I have also obtained perhaps a greater insight into what Jesus is saying.

It has also made me aware that the effects of the yeast and the mustard seed are not quick, these do not have fast results and we should not expect that from God's Kingdom either. It works in God's time.

To get the best bread you need to let the yeast work for longer.

My basic recipe uses 5grams of yeast to 500grams of flour and the proving lasts a couple of hours.

The bread is good, but if you use just 1 gram of yeast in 1kilogram of flour before adding the water and salt and leave it overnight, the bread is much better.

There are natural yeasts in flour, more in untreated and whole meal flours, but they are there in all flours and these are triggered by and work with the added yeast.

I believe that there is something of God in all of us, it just needs the right trigger to set it growing.

Just in the parable of the sower, some seed grows quickly, but the ground cannot sustain it and it dies. So it is with us. We need to grow in God slowly and to mature into a good crop over time.

Likewise, as we start to influence those around us by talking about God, so the God in them is also triggered to grow. But the community that grows out of this needs to do so in a measured way, so that it is sustainable.

But grow it must, or it too will die.

We might think that we are only one person, so small in the scale of things, but if we can trigger the God in other people, how great will our influence be?

We should not feel the need to rush, our influence might start with the offering of a cup of tea, or in these times, a telephone call, an email or text message just to make contact with that person, to make sure that they are all right and that they do not need anything which we can provide.

Our church community might seem small when compared with the number of people who live in our area, but if we can start to trigger the God in others, how great will that community become?

A mustard seed is very small, but over time it will grow into a tree that will support a number of birds and as it grows further it will support more.

But again it takes time.

The second group of parables talks about those who hear about Jesus, the God in them is activated and they just realise how good that is.

They then discard all that they gained their wealth from previously and concentrate only on him, because they realise not only can they get everything from just him, but that is better than all that they had before.

The third section relates to the harvest of what has been created.

The crowd to whom Jesus was talking would have understood about the need to sort a fish catch into what was worth keeping and what was not.

Your reputation as a provider of fish would have been jeopardised if it was known that you sold bad fish. Only the best is good enough for your customers.

And in God's case, only those who have accepted Jesus as their Lord and saviour was good enough for him.

The rest would be cast away into a fiery furnace, when the realisation that what they had been told about Jesus and had rejected, was in fact true, but it was then too late to do anything about it.

Notices

August Services

We will continue a temporary pattern of services during August, with the hope of beginning our new service pattern (originally intended to start in May) from September. The services in August will be as follows.

St John's

10.30am each Sunday (2 and 30 August will be Morning Prayer, with 9, 16 and 23 Eucharists) and 10am each Tuesday (BCP Holy Communion).

St Clement's

9.30am each Sunday (2 and 9 August will be Morning Prayer, with 16, 23 and 30 Eucharists).

St Michael's

10.30am each Sunday (2 and 30 August will be Eucharists, with 9, 16 and 23 Morning Prayer) and 10.30am each Thursday (Eucharist).

St David's

4pm on 2, 16 and 30 August (all Eucharists).

Masks

As of Friday 24 July, it is obligatory to wear face coverings in certain places, including shops and on public transport, unless you are exempt. These rules do not apply to places of worship or similar venues such as theatres and cinemas. Whether or not you wish to wear a mask to church in this Group is thus entirely your choice; we will not be compelling people either way. If you are wearing a face covering and would like to be seated in a more secluded place for a service, please have a quiet word with the warden on duty.

Pew Sheets

We will continue with these pew sheets until 30 August, but thereafter (unless there is a significant change in circumstances, such as another lockdown) we will cease to produce them. If you are now attending church regularly again and have been receiving a paper copy, could I please urge you to let us know so we can remove you from the distribution list (and thank you to those who have already done this). This pew sheet is primarily intended to keep in touch with those unable to attend church, and while we are very happy to continue to do this for this group, those who are attending can help us save paper by reducing the number we need to print. It is also worth bearing in mind that delivery relies upon the generosity of a team of volunteers and it is unfair to put unnecessary work onto them. If you would like to be removed from the mailing list for the electronic version, please also let us know, but obviously there is no printing or delivery associated with the e-mails so you are welcome to keep receiving these even if you are attending church again in person.