**The Rector's Ramblings**



In St Olav’s Christian Bookshop, we sell approximately 10 different translations of the Bible, out of the hundreds that are available, and so to assist people in choosing I produced cards with a selection of the most well-known passages from each translation. Customers can then see at a glance which translation is the one they can relate to, and understand, the best. Of course, once they have chosen a translation they are then faced with the equally daunting task of deciding between hard back or soft cover, large print or compact, standard or journaling.

To be honest, there is very little difference between the various modern translations, maybe the odd word is different, punctuation may change, and some use gender inclusive language, but the choice really comes down to which feels right in your hands, or simply which you prefer. However, there are significant differences between modern translations and the good old King James version, and I don’t just mean the use of thee and thou. These differences may be because the word used no longer means the same to us, or because scholars today have the benefit of over 400 years more archaeological and historic information, such as the Dead Sea Scrolls.

Now I admit that I don’t use the King James Version much, despite having a beautiful leatherbound copy on my shelf given to me at my ordination. I find it quite hard going sometimes, and whilst the language is beautiful it is also not easy, but occasionally the King James gives us an insight into Jesus’ message that has been slightly lost in modern times. A prime example of this is in the story of The Good Samaritan, our Gospel reading last week (Luke 10: 25 – 37).

In the New Revised Standard Version, the translation we use every Sunday, and indeed in most of the modern translations, we are told that the Samaritan ‘had pity’ on the man left battered and bruised beside the road. In the King James, we are told he ‘had compassion for him’. Pity or compassion? Does it matter? Yes, because it tells us more about why the Samaritan went out of his way to help, why he used up precious resources, and time, to bind up his wounds, and take the man to an Inn. It tells us that Jesus wants us to actively help, not just pass by.

Pity can be felt at a distance; it can be expressed without our actually doing anything. In the parable it is possible that the men who passed by on the other side of the road felt pity, but they weren’t moved to do anything. Pity can be felt mentally, but not emotionally. We can pity someone who has lost their job, or who has had an accident, but then we just get on with our day.

Compassion, on the other hand, is an emotional response. Compassion compels us to do something to help, however small, however insignificant it may seem. Compassion for someone means we will give them a hug, we’ll sit down with them and listen to them, really listen to them. If we feel compassion for someone, we will put aside our plans, just as the Good Samaritan did, to give them our full attention. Compassion for someone who has lost their job doesn’t mean we have to find them a new one, but maybe it means we will cook them a meal, or invite them out for the day. Compassion for someone who has had an accident means we will visit them in hospital, or buy them the food essentials. Compassion means we do something, even if it costs us in time or money.

Now sometimes we are moved to feel compassion for people and places too far away for us to offer practical support. We can’t go to Ukraine or Gaza and bind up people’s wounds. We can’t go to areas of flood or famine and help bring relief to the victims. But we can still put our compassion into action. We can provide financial support, as the Good Samaritan did in paying for the man to stay at the Inn. We can share our resources in sending food or clothing, as the Good Samaritan did in using his wine and oil to clean the man’s wounds. And we can pray. Because prayer is another way of giving our time and acting on our compassion. Prayer means we have to set aside our personal agenda, our personal timetables, and focus our thoughts on someone or something outside of ourselves, and sometimes giving our time in prayer for someone else can move us, inspire us, to act, just as the Good Samaritan did.

So Pity or Compassion? It’s just one word, but which we choose can make a huge difference.   
  
*Rev Sarah*

**Worship in the Valley Parish**

**20th July**

**Holy Communion**

# 10am St Andrew's, West Dean

**Rev Sarah Manouch**

*07468 854864 priestvalleyparish@gmail.com*

*Please note that I am part-time. My principal working days are Friday and Saturday as well as Sunday. I am not available on a Thursday.*