



Sunday 28th June 2026

The Fourth Sunday after Trinity

Gospel Reading

Matthew 10.40-42

Rewards

'Whoever welcomes you welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me. Whoever welcomes a prophet in the name of a prophet will receive a prophet's reward; and whoever welcomes a righteous person in the name of a righteous person will receive the reward of the righteous; and whoever gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones in the name of a disciple—truly I tell you, none of these will lose their reward.'

Other Readings: Genesis 22.1-14

Psalm 13

Romans 6.12-23

Homily

Today's Gospel is a very short passage but has a lot to say to us. Jesus refers to a common understanding of his time: when a king sends a messenger, the messenger should be treated with the same respect as the king himself. To honour the messenger is to honour the one who sent them. Jesus applies this principle to his apostles, who were sent to preach his message. By welcoming them, people were welcoming Christ himself.

But this message goes beyond the apostles. Anyone who tries to live out and share the message of Jesus, however imperfectly, is his messenger. Jesus speaks about "these little ones", meaning not just children, but any of his followers, especially those who may seem unimportant or easily overlooked. He reminds us that when we show kindness and care to others, we are also showing it to him.

Jesus says that even the smallest act of kindness will not go unnoticed. A simple gesture, such as giving a cup of cold water to someone in need, has value in God's eyes. While we may not always receive recognition or reward in this life, Jesus points us toward a greater reward in heaven. His words offer reassurance that our loving actions matter and that God sees every act of generosity, compassion, and service.

This promise of reward is not meant to be our motivation though; we do good not because we seek recognition but because we are grateful for the love and kindness God has shown us. The reward is an added blessing. Whether we do something big that changes many lives, or something small that brightens one person's day, it is all precious to God.

The image of a cup of cold water would have resonated strongly with Jesus' listeners. In the hot and dry climate of the Holy Land, offering cold water was a simple but genuine act of welcome and hospitality. Here in our churches we are more likely to offer a good old cup of tea, but the principle remains the same. When guests come into our lives we try to make them feel welcome, comfortable and valued.

This raises an important question: how do we welcome God into our lives? Do we make space for him in our daily routines? Do we give him time to speak to us, guide us, and work through us? Hospitality towards God involves opening our hearts and allowing him to shape our lives according to his purposes.

Being a Christian is also about developing a loving spirit. Through our words and actions, we witness to a God who loved the world so much that he gave his Son to save us from our sins. We respond by sharing that love with others. Acts of kindness, patience, forgiveness, and understanding become powerful testimonies to the faith we profess.

At the same time, we must learn to receive kindness graciously. As the hymn reminds us, "Pray that I may have the grace to let you be my servant, too." Accepting help can be difficult, but when we do so, we allow others the opportunity to serve Christ through their generosity. Receiving a "cup of cold water" can be just as important as offering one.

This idea is beautifully illustrated by the friendship cake that many of us may remember making. A starter mixture is made and then the mix grows when it is fed and cared for. One portion is used to bake a cake, while several more portions are shared with others so they can continue the process. In theory, the cakes could continue indefinitely as long as people kept feeding and sharing the mixture. God's goodness works in much the same way. His love is abundant and never exhausted. The more we share it, the more it grows and spreads.

In our complicated world there are many challenges we face, but it is also full of opportunities to share God's love. Today's Gospel reminds us that even the smallest actions can make a significant difference. If each of us takes one small step in showing kindness, compassion and welcome, together we can have a remarkable impact.

Perhaps that means slowing down to notice what is happening around us, letting someone cross the road, offering a smile to a stranger, expressing gratitude to someone who has helped us, or simply taking time to listen. Such simple acts may seem insignificant, but they reflect God's love and help overcome the negativity and division we so often encounter.

So may we be people of love, forgiveness, kindness and understanding in a world that needs it more than ever. And through both the big and the small things we do, may we welcome Christ in others and share the abundance of God's love with everyone we meet.

Amen.

Conversation Questions

1. Jesus says that a simple act, such as offering a cup of cold water, has value in God's eyes. What small acts of kindness can you offer to others that might make a difference to someone's day?
2. What practical ways can we make space for God amid the busyness of everyday life, and how might that change the way we treat others?
3. Is there anything else from the passage not already discussed that speaks to you? What is it?
4. What will you do this week in your Monday-to-Saturday ministry in response to what you have heard today? #everydayfaith

Prayer

Spend some time in prayer, responding to what you have heard today and listening to what God might be saying to you.

Collect of the day

*O God, the protector of all who trust in you,
without whom nothing is strong, nothing is holy:
increase and multiply upon us your mercy;
that with you as our ruler and guide
we may so pass through things temporal
that we lose not our hold on things eternal;
grant this, heavenly Father,
for our Lord Jesus Christ's sake,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.*

(or)

*Gracious Father,
by the obedience of Jesus
you brought salvation to our wayward world:
draw us into harmony with your will,
that we may find all things restored in him,
our Saviour Jesus Christ.*

Common Worship: Services and Prayers for the Church of England, material from which is incorporated in this service paper, is copyright © The Archbishops' Council, 2000. Scripture passage from the New Revised Standard Version (Anglicised) copyright © 1989, 1995 the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved.