

Bulletin for Sunday

26th July 2020

Dear Friends

Good morning! This Sunday we are going to hear more parables from the Gospel of Matthew - little, short parables that come thick and fast... But first let's sing:

Hymn: Immortal, invisible, God only wise (Rejoice & Sing 67)

Prayer: Loving God, as we come to worship you:
we thank you for this opportunity to take time
and to be aware of your presence with us;
we thank you for the Bible,
and the many images it gives us of you and of your kingdom;
and we thank you that we are taught, and fascinated, and fed
by those images and ideas.
We ask your blessing on everything we do,
and everything we give in your service,
today and every day. Amen

followed by The Lord's Prayer

Readings: Matthew chapter 13: verses 31-33 and 44-52

Reflection: I have never been particularly fond of courgettes; so I don't usually bother to grow them myself. My daughter, however, loves them - so this year, by request, I have a couple of plants in the garden; and they are coming along nicely. So nicely in fact that they have just got to that stage when as soon as you take your eyes off them they double in size, and overnight they seem to go from too small to notice to something resembling a prize marrow. My daughter has been stunned! Reading some of these parables made me think of those courgettes - although the images Jesus used in these parables recorded by Matthew were, of course, more familiar to his original Mediterranean audience.

Our passage this week includes not one (as in recent weeks) but many short parables; all connected by a common theme of the kingdom of heaven (which is the term Matthew prefers for the kingdom of God).

Firstly we learn that the kingdom may start very small, but it will grow rapidly to be very big indeed. Like the mustard seed and the yeast, it will become quite unexpectedly enormous. Both those parables are full of humorous exaggeration, but the point made is about great and surprising growth - that the kingdom will grow and permeate everything.

Secondly we learn that the kingdom is valuable - so valuable that it would be impossible to overestimate it; so valuable that people will give up absolutely everything else for it. There is a third element to some of these parables - an element of hiddenness. Yeast in dough is not apparent, and the treasure in the field was deliberately hidden. Perhaps the kingdom - despite being infinitely valuable - requires seeking out by those who truly want it. What if God's kingdom is growing all around us, all the time, but not immediately apparent...? How much do we value it and want it - enough to really look? In short - what efforts do we make to search for God and God's ways?

Hymn: Come, living God, when least expected (R&S 354)

Prayer: Living God, we pray for our world - which is really your world.
We pray for all who work daily to improve the lives of others:
carers and teachers, all who work in hospitals and surgeries,
counsellors and chaplains and many, many more...
We pray for all working to bring the good news of your kingdom:
writers and preachers and neighbours and friends...
And we hold before you in prayer all those in need:
the sick, the exhausted, the bereaved and the lonely...
those known to us... and those known only to you...
We pray for our loved ones, and our communities;
and we lay before you our hopes and our fears.....
In Jesus' name, Amen

Hymn: The kingdom of God is justice and joy (R&S 200)

May we be open to God's kingdom
around us and within us;
and may the blessing of God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
be with us and with all those we love
this week and every week. Amen

There will again be an evening service - Sunday at Six - on Zoom this evening; contact me for an invitation - all very welcome as we explore stories the story of Leah and Rachel.

Please let me know of any news or prayer requests to be shared.

Every blessing for the coming week - stay safe.

Anne Lewitt