

Sermon Sunday 28th August 2022

Jeremiah2: 4-13 and Luke14: 1, 7 – 14

I need three people to help me in my sermon, who I will pick at random.

Right take a seat, any seat (times three.)

What a marvellous collection but hang on is the order correct? (MOVE THEM AROUND). Does, anybody know what this is based upon? Correct, the Gospel reading from Luke. Now, I have moved the people around and arrived at the order I think is right. What do they think?

So, what is Jesus trying to teach us here in the reading from Luke? Two things. Jesus is telling the guests and us not to seek the best places or places of honour; why because there may be someone more deserving than us to that place. God is more interested in service rather than status or age and we should not seek the place of honour. In our society we hear of people and see those who want to increase their social standing and tell everyone about it; they are the same people who will try and sit in the place of honour, look at me. As I said God is more interested in service rather than status or age. Why? Because service in God's kingdom here on earth is so much more important than status which includes readers, priests, bishops and even archbishops and so many more. We are all called to serve in Gods kingdom here on earth in whatever role we are called to.

In verses 12 and 13 Jesus told his host [READ 12 AND 13]. In other words, not to be exclusive in who he invites to the feast, it is not for us to decide, like the host; God opens His kingdom to everyone and it is our role to tell people about God and His Son Jesus Christ, so that they too will know God and how this will change their lives. Jesus is also telling us that we must not seek a return from whom we invite to the feast; invite those who are unable to return the favour and we will be blessed and I repeat it is us, you and me, who invite people to Gods feast or kingdom and seek no reward or special status because it is our duty as Christians.

Verse 11 {READ VERSE 11}. Jesus is talking about being humble. If you have read David Copperfield by Dickens, you will meet a character called Uriah Heap who tells everyone how humble he is but all the time plotting to enhance his

status. This Uriah Heap humility is not the humility Jesus means, the type of humility that manipulates or fool's other people, as Heap does. Many people will put themselves down saying 'I can't do that' or just refusing to believe they can. We must all realise what our abilities or limitations are but never dismiss them because God has a role or purpose for you and me. You and I must recognise the gifts, strengths and talents God gives us and be willing to use them in God's service here in our community. We have to embrace Jesus' teachings in all we do and say and think. Humility is not about self-degradation or put more simply putting ourselves down. Humility is for me to surrender one's self to God and His Son Jesus Christ and make a commitment to serve others thus serving God in whatever way I am called too, without status or saying 'look at me.'

Let's now look at Jeremiah and like so much of the O.T. very relevant to today. There is a song from the 60's which has the words 'Jeremiah was a bullfrog and a good friend of mine.' I am sure Jeremiah would have loved to have been a good friend of the people of Judah but they just would not listen to his prophecies from God and change their ways.

In verse 11 Jeremiah prophesies **BUT MY PEOPLE HAVE EXCHANGED THEIR GLORY FOR WORTHLESS IDOLS.** In our modern secular world this is still happening. In our secular world many people strive for status, the latest gadgets and lifestyle what I like to call the 'I want society' and replacing God with many false idols and wants and status of look what I have. This was happening in Judah and I repeat is still relevant and happening today in our society and in the world in which we live. Jeremiah is telling Judah that they will be destroyed by Babylon, because they have abandoned God, the spring of living water and have dug cisterns which cannot hold water, God's spring of living water. Jeremiah was warning Judah and there is a warning for us and our world beset by deteriorating spirituality among people, economic and political uncertainty, wars and poverty around the world. We must change.

The message for me is to trust in the Lord and to do all we can to bring an end to poverty in our community and the world, to pray for peace and help victims of war and persecution. How, by taking God and the teachings of His Son Jesus Christ in everything we do. In God we have immense strength and the ability to use what we have for the benefit of others because we have God at the

centre of our lives and together as a united worldwide Church as well as individually, we can achieve so much and change peoples lives and the world. Yes, we will be criticised, however we must persevere.

I have said how relevant the O.T. is today and during my morning prayers this week I read a prayer written in 550 by Benedict of Nursia, with which I would like to finish as it sums up for me what I have been trying to say this morning of how we must place God at the centre. Let us pray.

O gracious and Holy Father,
Give us wisdom to perceive you,
Diligence to seek you,
Patience to wait for you,
A heart to meditate upon you,
And a life to proclaim you,
Through the power of the spirit
Of Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.