

All Saints Church, Kempston
St James's Church, Biddenham

Virtual Church News

13 June 2021

2nd Sunday after Trinity



A Reading for the Week

Mark 4.26-34

He also said, 'The kingdom of God is as if someone would scatter seed on the ground, and would sleep and rise night and day, and the seed would sprout and grow, he does not know how. The earth produces of itself, first the stalk, then the head, then the full grain in the head. But when the grain is ripe, at once he goes in with his sickle, because the harvest has come.'

He also said, 'With what can we compare the kingdom of God, or what parable will we use for it? It is like a mustard seed, which, when sown upon the ground, is the smallest of all the seeds on earth; yet when it is sown it grows up and becomes the greatest of all shrubs, and puts forth large branches, so that the birds of the air can make nests in its shade.'

With many such parables he spoke the word to them, as they were able to hear it; he did not speak to them except in parables, but he explained everything in private to his disciples.

Welcome to Virtual Church News. Hard copies will be circulated to those without access to email/social media. If you know of anyone without email who you think would benefit from a hard copy, please email stjameschurchbiddenham@gmail.com or call Jacqui on 356993.

This Week's Services

- Sunday 9.30am: Service at St James, Biddenham
- Sunday 11.00am: Virtch (Zoom)
- Monday 9.00am: Morning Prayers (Zoom)
- Wednesday 6.00pm: Virtch (Zoom)

Services in Church

This Sunday we warmly welcome you back to All St James's Church with a service at 9.30am. There is no need to book. Please remember your face covering (unless you are exempt from wearing one).

We look forward to seeing you in person!

Message from Revd Eric Lomax

Jesus uses simple agricultural illustrations. He does it all the time. He is talking to simple people who understand the simple illustrations of creation. With Jesus things are seldom what they seem. He talks about water but actually he's talking about the spirit of God. He talks about bread and wine being like his own body and blood, but actually he is talking about his own presence in a suffering community who are fed in the wilderness of creation. There is a deeper more powerful meaning to everything he says.

One of the devices he uses is the parable, a very simple story that has a deep and spiritual meaning, and in these stories, he's talking about the kingdom of God. This is not some vague conceptualisation of heaven, it is rather the power of God working in real time in the world.

The stories are projected on a community of believers not just at the time of Jesus but long after the crucifixion. They have been passed through the recollections of the original disciples, then through the pen of a scribe to Christians who have the hopeless task of trying to present good news to a hostile world. They are facing persecution and suffering to a level that we cannot even comprehend, and they are asking the question

'how on earth do we do this task?'

They know they are weak, they know that in flesh and blood they do not have the resources to do the task in hand, and they identify completely with the words that Jesus spoke on the cross; 'my God my God why have you forsaken me?'

Somewhere in their consciousness, there is the memory of God's covenant. This is the promise that God would never abandon his people. Today suffering persecution and despair rules the world, but God promises that it will not always be this way. This kingdom is not about some despot ruler. It is the opposite. It is about the end of oppression and injustice, and it is about hope. God's rule is a rule of love, justice and mercy, and because of the nature of God, the establishment of this Kingdom is not like an oppressive military invasion, rather it is

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Virtch

Zoom services are held at 11am on Sunday, 9am on Monday and 6pm on Wednesday. Simply go to Zoom and enter meeting ID 998 074 6039.



Message from Revd Eric Lomax continued
as real and as gentle as the movement of the seasons, or the growing of a seed. Feel powerless to do God's work? That is because you are, but do not be afraid, it is God's work.

The second part of our reading is simply about a tiny seed that grows into a huge tree. This is a word of encouragement to those suffering, persecuted Christians, and indeed it is a word of encouragement to us. It is difficult to see the fruit of God's Kingdom from the smallest amount of work you feel able to do. This is God's work, and he can do miracles with the little you feel able to do. Be courageous, be hopeful and have faith.

The first part addresses these early Christians who, filled with fear, have no idea how to bring this Kingdom about. Jesus says that they should not worry. Simply plant the seed of God's love and wait for him to do his work. They should be like the farmer who sows, and then rests to let the creator do his work. Do not be afraid of your lack of power; tell the story and let the God of love do the rest.

God Bless

Eric

Let us pray...

Faithful Creator,
whose mercy never fails:
deepen our faithfulness to you
and to your living Word,
Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen



Covid-19 Support Networks

If you need support with shopping, loneliness or anything else at this time please do get in touch!

Biddenham: Ring 01234 815393 (daytime only) or email help@biddenham.org.uk with your name/phone number/address.

Kempston: Contact Rev Eric Lomax (328452), Alison Walker (851597) or Alan/Anita Lowe (857212).

Church Services etc. on TV/Radio

If you don't have access to the internet, try tuning in to the following:

Sunday 13 June

- 8.00am Three Counties Radio - weekly service.
- 8.10am BBC Radio 4 - Sunday Worship.
- 1.15pm BBC 2 - Songs of Praise.
- 3.00pm BBC Radio 3 - Choral Evensong.

Wednesday 16 June

- 3.30pm BBC Radio 3 - Choral Evensong.

Marmalade/Chutney Sale!

Sue Squire will be selling home-made marmalade and chutney after the 9.30am alternate Sunday services at St James's in aid of the St James's flower fund. If you would like some, make sure you remember to bring some cash!



Bedford Foodbank

Items currently needed: UHT MILK, Cup-a-Soup, Jumbo Hotdogs, Tinned Tuna, Tinned Fruit, Tinned Vegetables, Squash, Ham (Small Tins), Jam, Coffee, Washing-Up Liquid, Anti-Bac Spray, Shower Gel.

Please continue to support this valuable charity and help them prevent hunger in our community, either with donations of food or financially.



Prayer/Bible Study Groups

Join our prayer group at 8pm on the 1st/3rd Thursdays of the month via Zoom. Everyone welcome. We also have Bible study groups which are open to everyone.

Contact John Lambert for further details, or with any prayer requests. John.c.lambert@gmail.com



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All Age Reading

1 Samuel 15v34 - 16v13

Then Samuel left and went to Ramah. But Saul went up to his home in Gibeah. And Samuel never saw Saul again all the rest of his life. But he was sorry for Saul. And the Lord was very sorry he had made Saul king of Israel.

The Lord said to Samuel, "How long will you continue to feel sorry for Saul? I have rejected him as king of Israel. Fill your container with olive oil and go. I am sending you to Jesse who lives in Bethlehem. I have chosen one of his sons to be king."

But Samuel said, "If I go, Saul will hear the news. And he will try to kill me."

The Lord said, "Take a young calf with you. Say, 'I have come to offer a sacrifice to the Lord.' Invite Jesse to the sacrifice. Then I will show you what to do. You must appoint the one I show you."

Samuel did what the Lord told him to do. When he arrived at Bethlehem, the elders of Bethlehem shook with fear. They met him and asked, "Are you coming in peace?"

Samuel answered, "Yes, I come in peace. I have come to make a sacrifice to the Lord. Make yourselves holy for the Lord and come to the sacrifice with me." Then he made Jesse and his sons holy for the Lord. And he invited them to come to the sacrifice.

When they arrived, Samuel saw Eliab. Samuel thought, "Surely the Lord has appointed this person standing here before him."

But the Lord said to Samuel, "Don't look at how handsome Eliab is. Don't look at how tall he is. I have not chosen him. God does not see the same way people see. People look at the outside of a person, but the Lord looks at the heart."

Then Jesse called Abinadab and told him to pass by Samuel. But Samuel said, "The Lord has not chosen this man either." Then Jesse had Shammah pass by. But Samuel said, "No, the Lord has not chosen this one." Jesse had seven of his sons pass by Samuel. But Samuel said to him, "The Lord has not chosen any of these."

Then he asked Jesse, "Are these all the sons you have?"

Jesse answered, "I still have the youngest son. He is out taking care of the sheep."

Samuel said, "Send for him. We will not sit down to eat until he arrives."

So Jesse sent and had his youngest son brought in. He was a fine boy, tanned and handsome.

The Lord said to Samuel, "Go! Appoint him. He is the one."

So Samuel took the container of olive oil. Then he poured oil on Jesse's youngest son to appoint him in front of his brothers. From that day on, the Lord's Spirit entered David with power. Samuel then went back to Ramah.

The All Age Bit!

This week we are exploring together the story of Samuel anointing David. In the story, God was looking for a new King. The old King, Saul, was disobedient and full of pride. God wanted somebody who would follow him and live in obedience, who was humble and caring. David did not look like much on the outside but in his heart he knew and loved God. He was a shepherd with a loving heart who looked after his sheep, just like God looks after us.

Activities

Self portraits - use any materials you have to create your own family self portraits - draw, paint or create a collage! Once you have finished your self-portraits why not try to draw a heart portrait. You could fill your portrait with words or images that represent the things that are most important to you.

What's inside - place mystery items into an empty box or container and take it in turns to reach inside and try to work out what the item is without looking. In the story, Samuel was judging the sons of Jesse by how they looked on the outside, but God had a very different way of deciding who would make the best King!

Song

Put your hands in the sky

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UyTnBD5vyCg>

Prayer

Dear God, thank you for the story of Samuel anointing David which reminds us that you know us inside and out. Thank you that each one of us is created exactly as you want us to be. Help us to dedicate our lives to you like David did, to seek to be people after your heart. Thank you that we are chosen and loved too. Amen.

Resources from Together at Home. www.tath.co.uk.

Suggested Music for this week

The King of love my shepherd is

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nWfZ-8s71-k>

Hail to the Lord's anointed

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EkrepBvrL14>

I am loved

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=--3eNmc_t1s