



Sunday, 7 July 2019 – Trinity 3
Sermon for 10.00am Eucharist at St Andrew's Parish Church Guernsey
Readings: Isaiah 66: 10-14, Gospel St Luke 10: 1-11. 16-20
Given by Rev Juliette E C Robilliard

Question?

When we were having coffee at the Last Post after Parish Prayers a week ago, some of you asked me "How long it takes you to write a sermon?" I said that all depends on what leaps out at me from the readings of the day and what God-given inspiration I hope to receive to share with you.

Thought bubbles

But don't let me hog the experience let's share it! What struck you about today's readings, perhaps the one from Isaiah. Did you like the style of writing or not? Did a thought bubble pop out of your head as it was read to us or, was your mind wandering on the many commitments you have to fulfil? As it happens, I'm not preaching on Isaiah today: it's like that sometimes, the words did not speak to me this time. But the Gospel was an altogether different matter! Five inter-connecting thoughts popped into my mind.

Let love lead

First, when Jesus sent his followers out to speak in his name, he told them to travel lightly. The message is, therefore, urgent. We are not to get bogged down worrying about details but just share the message of the kingdom of God and that's a message of love. Or, as the retiring Roman Catholic Dean was reported as saying in the Guernsey Press yesterday, "You mightn't be good at preaching and teaching but just show people you love them." With some people that's not always easy but through love giving people faith and hope in God is what gives purpose and reason to life. If we feel we're bogged down with commitments, is it time to let something go so that we are able to give God our quality time?

Permission to stop

Second, Jesus gives us permission if, when speaking of faith to people they close their ears, then we need spend no further time on them. For as Jesus says "Whoever rejects you, rejects me". So, it's his mission and not ours, therefore, we don't need to get anxious about it.

Be joyful

Third, if we don't have to worry, then the opposite is to be joyful. And, the disciples were certainly joyful when they came bouncing back from their mission excursions.

They told Jesus of all the amazing things that had happened: in fact, you could say they were crowing about it! Jesus gives them a gentle reality check. Rather than boasting about helping to build God's kingdom on earth it is better to be grateful that we have established firm foundations in heaven.

Good v Evil

The fourth point that Jesus said which struck me is that I don't often preach directly about the effect that sin has on the world: in a way it's so self-evident in daily living. Nor do I speak of Satan. If God is all that is love then there is an agent of all that is loveless. Our comfort comes from Jesus prophesying that he sees Satan fall. He predicts the final triumph of God's good over the dark forces of this world. God's good sets us free, through Jesus Christ.

So what?

That's stirring stuff but when preaching a sermon, it's always important to ask "So what?" What difference does it make to me and the world? Here it is and, my 5th thought bubble. For those of you who have not yet had the chance to attend Parish Prayers, we share news with each other maybe about those within our own congregation whose health has improved, so that we can give thanks. Then there's the wider parish: people are starting to learn that we are praying for them. Those who make our coffee; the people who supply our water, the Douzaine that gives so much time towards parish administration and the upkeep of this church: and there's the parish-based charities doing good work too. Some have even asked us to include prayers of special intention for their projects. This is community mission in our day and age. All of us dropping a few words into a conversation is all that it takes to connect people to God. In terms of our Mission Action Plan, these may be small steps but a major milestone of progress towards building a parish community moving forward in faith.

Conclusion

To sum up, I repeat some words of today's Collect:

Almighty God,
give us grace to dedicate our freedom to your
service, that we and all creation may be
brought to the glorious liberty of the children of God.
Amen.