



Sunday, 30 June 2019 – 2nd Sunday of Trinitity
Sermon for 8.00am Eucharist at St Andrew's Parish Church Guernsey
Readings: 1 Kings 19: 15-16. 19-end Gospel St Luke 9: 51-end
Given by Rev Juliette E C Robilliard

Today's readings are similar as they both feature ploughing and discipleship. In the Gospel Jesus is scathing of the wannabe disciples who meet him along the way: "Yes, Lord, we want to follow you but ... not just yet!" They're more anxious about creature comforts and their future inheritances, to throw that all up for God.

Elisha too, at first, seems hesitant when Elijah calls him to be his disciple. He's ploughing a field so large it needs 12 yoke of oxen to get the job done. Clearly Shaphat, Elisha's father, must be a significant landowner and a man of considerable wealth. Is that the reason for Elisha's hesitation? If he left his father's house and management of the estate, there'd be no turning back incurring the loss of a substantial future inheritance. So, Elijah says to him "Go back, what have I done to you."

I think the words 'I' done to 'you' are key. Is it Elijah speaking to Elisha or God speaking through Elijah? God who is the 'Great I Am'. The important link word is 'done'. Because, God does not do things to us but does things for us. He does not force us to serve him but stands waiting patiently for us to turn to him. Elisha realised to turn his back on Elijah, would be to turn his back on God. So, he acts courageously and irrevocably slaughtering his yoke of oxen and sets out decisively.

Elisha's firm commitment was likely to be the culmination of a growing calling that had kindled in him for a long time. In a way the eleven yoke of oxen that stretched out across the field ahead of Elisha giving him a guiding line can be likened to those people in our lives who act as our guides, keeping us on the straight and narrow, not only in life but in faith.

Faithful discipleship, as Jesus says, is the same as ploughing a straight furrow, we are not fit to serve if we are constantly hankering after times past. We need a fixed point ahead of us that assures us we are on the right path: that fixed point is Jesus Christ. Focusing on Jesus ensures that no matter what stones or weeds litter our furrows in life, he will signpost the way, giving us the power to step forward in faith gathering us into the kingdom of God.

Today's question to ponder is are we looking back or are we forging ahead to the kingdom of God?

Amen