

26/7/20 Trinity 7 (week 19)

Hello to you all once again. It's hard to believe that we've reached 19 weeks, almost 5 months of shielding and restricted movement after lockdown. It has eased off over the last month, wisely or not, time will tell. And with shielding being lifted from 1st August, hopefully will be a time to venture out again and re-join the real world, scary though it may be. Sadly, this week will be my last Warbling as on 9th August we will be having our first service back in church, hooray!! and it will be lovely to be in church to share in person. I have enjoyed writing them each week but the bishops and archdeacons are writing a series of sermons over the summer which clergy have been invited to use so next week I will be sending you a sermon by the Archdeacon of Liverpool, Mike McGurk. I do hope you have enjoyed receiving my Warblings but I'm ready for a little break!!

Today's reading from Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52, ends the series of Parables and there are two which have a special meaning, the parable of the Hidden Treasure and the Precious Pearl.

But first, why did Jesus tell these stories? In my research, one writer says that some people have an idea of what God's kingdom is like, an insight, and it's like a gift but not everyone receives it and the parables are meant to engender a readiness which will 'nudge' people towards gaining that insight for themselves as without it no one would understand what Jesus is saying. Verses 34 and 35 are not included in the reading but they sum up why Jesus spoke in parables, "To fulfil what had been spoken through the prophet; I will open my mouth to speak in parables; I will proclaim what has been hidden from the foundation of the world." Jesus would use them to teach things unknown since the world began at God's hand, to those open to receive them through the generations to come.

Jesus began each short parable with the words, "The Kingdom of heaven is like this." The treasure found in the field was revealed by accident and the man recognised its value and sold everything he had to buy the whole field. In the story about the pearl, the man had been searching for fine pearls, and sold everything to buy the one he found as again he appreciated it's value. The story of the Hidden Treasure and the Pearl illustrate the need for a whole hearted response to the Kingdom of heaven, no expense spared as this kingdom is more precious than

anything you will ever possess so we have to be willing to give up everything to obtain it. In whichever way someone finds Jesus, whether unexpectedly or after a long search, reaching that realisation is priceless.

In the final two verses Jesus asked if those who were listening understood what he was saying but it was a challenge aimed particularly at the teachers of the law. “Therefore, every scribe who has been trained for the Kingdom of heaven is like the master of a household who brings out of his treasures what is new and what is old.” The challenge was to fulfil their responsibilities as teachers and carry on serving God by teaching truths and knowledge they had to hand, from the Old Testament, the scriptures they knew of old, now enlightened by the new treasures Jesus taught, to the ‘foundation of the world’ bringing God’s eternal truths to light.

Those who understood God’s purpose in the law of the Old Testament, could see that all scriptures pointed to Jesus. Everyone can find and receive new treasure with the old, both are precious and of immense value for guidance in faith and living in the world, dovetailing into each other; a treasure indeed.

Jesus enriches our lives, and our Rule of Life will help us to use what we already know and finding how the connections are made between old and new, which help us to “Live our best life” so the saying goes. We all have God given gifts and as we use them, they will become even more wonderful as we serve him and others, in the light of the knowledge that Jesus has given.

Amen

With Love and Prayers

Rev Tracey xx