

CUTTING EDGE CAMELOT, No 63

Sunday 25th October 2020

‘Virtually Church but with some way to go...’

Welcome

Welcome to this Sunday’s edition of Cutting Edge Camelot. Below Anna reflects on the unlimited scope of Jesus’ power and ministry and how this might encourage us to see God at work in the world around us.

Scripture Passage

Matthew 22.34-46

When the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together, and one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him. “Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?” He said to him, “‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbour as yourself.’ On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.”

Now while the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them this question: “What do you think of the Messiah? Whose son is he?” They said to him, “The son of David.” He said to them, “How is it then that David by the Spirit calls him Lord, saying,

‘The Lord said to my Lord,
“Sit at my right hand,
until I put your enemies under your feet”?’

If David thus calls him Lord, how can he be his son?” No one was able to give him an answer, nor from that day did anyone dare to ask him any more questions.

Reflection

Have you been in one of those situations when someone has asked a question and been met with an awkward silence? No-one wants to venture an answer, and everyone is hoping that someone else will say *something* to break the silence. I wonder if that's how the Pharisees felt in this situation. They might have started off feeling rather smug that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, but by the end of this passage, the Pharisees too have been silenced.

It all started off rather well, with one of the Pharisees asking Jesus a question designed to trip him up: "Teacher", he asks, "which commandment in the law is the greatest?". This is perhaps like asking a parent or teacher who their favourite child or pupil is. They aren't meant to have favourites! And similarly, the Pharisees, who sought to follow 613 commandments, were not expected to see one as more important than all the rest; all of them were necessary for living according to God's will. So it's a tricky question. But because we are living in a different context, we probably don't fully appreciate how clever Jesus' answer is.

Jesus begins his answer by saying the greatest commandment is, 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind'. As you probably know, these words come from Deuteronomy 6 and are the first commandment given to the people of Israel. They also form the beginning of the *Shema*, a prayer said by Jews every morning and evening. None of the Pharisees could possibly have argued that this commandment wasn't at the very core of their identity as the People of God.

However, Jesus then identifies the second greatest commandment: 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself'. This commandment is found in Leviticus, and in Leviticus it is followed by the words 'I am the Lord'. In other words, our love for our neighbour is grounded in our love for God, and our love for God spills out in our love for our neighbours.

Having offered the Pharisees an exceptional answer to their question, Jesus then asks them a question: “What do you think of the Messiah? Whose son is he?” The Pharisees respond, perhaps feeling relieved to be asked such an easy question. Obviously, the Messiah is David’s son, everyone knows *that!* But then Jesus throws a spanner in the works:

“How is it then that David by the Spirit calls him Lord, saying,
‘The Lord said to my Lord,
‘Sit at my right hand,
until I put your enemies under your feet’”?
If David thus calls him Lord, how can he be his son?”

And this is where I imagine an awkward silence... as the Pharisees look to one another, desperately hoping that someone else will say something, *anything*, to fill the silence. But no, no-one has a response.

But other than being an effective way of silencing a group of first century Pharisees, what do Jesus’ words mean? And in particular, what do they mean for us today?

The passage of Scripture that Jesus quotes comes from Psalm 110 and was considered to be a psalm written by David. So when David writes, ‘The Lord said to my Lord’, he is saying, ‘The Lord [*God the Father*] said to my Lord [*the Messiah*]’. Hence Jesus’ question, how can David call his own son – the Messiah – ‘Lord’? Is Jesus saying that the Messiah *isn’t* David’s son? (This would have been a hugely controversial claim.)

No, Jesus is not denying the fact that the Messiah is the Son of David, i.e. a descendant of David, but he is saying that the Messiah is *more* than simply the Son of David. The Jews were expecting the Messiah to be like David in terms of being a king like David, a king who would overthrow the power of the Romans and take back Jerusalem. Jesus challenges this understanding of the Messiah by suggesting that if David himself calls the Messiah ‘Lord’, then their understanding of the Messiah might need rethinking.

In fact, the Messiah they had been waiting for was standing before them, but they had failed to recognise him because their idea of what the Messiah was like had become too limited. Jesus was indeed the Son of David - a descendant of David – but more importantly, he was the Son of *God*. The Pharisees, along with many other Jews, had reduced the Messiah to a political leader who was primarily concerned with the People of Israel. But as the Son of God, Jesus was concerned with all people and had come to save everyone. When in Psalm 110 God says to the Messiah, “Sit at my right hand, until I put your enemies under your feet”, these ‘enemies’ are not just the political enemies of Israel, but the enemies of all people: they are the enemies of sin and death. Jesus, the Messiah, came to overthrow the powers of sin and death so that all people can be free. I wonder if at times we also place limits on what Jesus, the Messiah, can do?

Do we have such fixed ideas about how Jesus might be at work that we miss what he is doing and fail to join in? Have we limited how Jesus might be at work in the world to Sunday mornings and “churchy” or “Christian” things? Might we be missing what he’s doing on Monday mornings? Through the gift of the Bible and through the gift of the Holy Spirit, we have all that we need to continue Jesus’ work today. It might be a bit messy, and might not look very “churchy”, but how might Jesus be calling us to be at work in his world today?

Anna

Hymn Suggestions

Two suggestions for hymns are ‘O Jesus, I have promised’ and ‘Beauty for brokenness’. Both of these can be found on YouTube.

Points for Prayers

- For our spiritual growth and discipleship as we respond to the good news of Jesus Christ

- For further services in the Group this month and particularly for Harvest services
- Thanksgiving for care, skill and courage of NHS workers and those in care homes
- Those suffering from coronavirus in hospitals, care homes and at home
- Need for further largescale testing and research into and development of a vaccine as soon as this can be achieved
- Preparations to avert or minimise a second wave of coronavirus
- Our Bishops (please see notice below)
- For North Cadbury Church Primary School and Marchant Holliday school in our benefice remembering also Horsington school as they proceed with their new school year
- Prayers for those affected economically by the lockdown, for businesses and those who have become unemployed
- Prayers and thanksgiving for contributions to the foodbanks and for those helping to take these to the foodbanks.

Forthcoming services of public worship

Please see the following schedule of forthcoming services of public worship. This does not include all of the monthly services across the Group held pre-lockdown. So if a service in the Group which you regularly attended is not included in the schedule you are of course most welcome to attend any other service within the Group. However, because of the limitations on capacity in the various churches through the need for social distancing it would be appreciated if you could in these circumstances let the relevant churchwarden know in advance of your intention to do this.

Any further additions to this schedule will be notified as and when they arise.

Sunday 25th October (clocks go back)

- 8.00 am, St Michael's Blackford, Communion (Anna will preside)
9.30 am, St John the Baptist North Cheriton, Communion
9.30 am, St Mary's Compton Pauncefoot, Matins
11.00 am, St Michael's North Cadbury, Communion (Anna will preside)
11.00 am, St Mary's Yarlington, Sunday Worship
11.00 am, St Thomas a Becket South Cadbury, Harvest Service
3.00 pm, St Nicholas Bratton Seymour, Harvest Service
4.00 pm, Galhampton, Evening Service

Sunday 1st November

- 9.00 am, St Mary's Yarlington, Communion (Anna will preside)
9.30 am, St John the Baptist North Cheriton, Camelot Morning Worship
11.00 am, St Michael's North Cadbury, Group Communion
4.00 pm, St Michael's North Cadbury, All Souls Service (see below)

All Saints and All Souls Service

This year our Benefice All Saints and All Souls Service will be held at 4pm at St Michael's, North Cadbury on Sunday 1st November. The service is a chance to remember and to give thanks for those people whom we have loved who have passed away.

During the service, there will be an opportunity to light a candle and place it on the altar as an act of remembrance. If you are unable to attend the service, but would like a loved one remembered at the service, please let Anna know the name(s) of the individual(s) you would like remembered, so that a candle can be lit and their name placed on the altar. Anna can be

contacted at curate@camelotparishes.org.uk or on 441160, please let her know by Sunday 25th October.

St Nicholas Bratton Seymour

A Risk Assessment for St Nicholas Bratton Seymour has now been completed and the first service to be held there following lockdown will be the Harvest Service on 25th October at 3.00 pm. This means that all the Camelot churches will then have returned to public worship following lockdown.

Private prayer and Celtic worship

North Cadbury church continues to be open for private prayer on Wednesday afternoons from 2.30 pm to 4.00 pm.

Galhampton is no longer open for private prayer. However on Wednesday at 7.00 pm it is open for Celtic Worship led by Alison.

Excalibur and the Parish Office

Because of concerns relating to the hand delivery of parish magazines (see official Church of England guidance on this point) an electronic rather than a printed version of Excalibur will be continue to be produced for the time being. This will be available on the website, www.camelotparishes.co.uk, and will include Camelot People giving details of occasional offices in the benefice. The October Excalibur is now available on the website.

The Parish Office is closed although Rob does come in regularly. In his absence please contact Rob via email (office@camelotparishes.org.uk) or on 01749 850934.

Update on Bishop Peter

Bishop Peter thanks everyone for all the cards and other expressions of support which he has received. A card was sent to him on behalf of the Camelot Parishes as a whole. He says that he has been lifted on 'eagle's wings' through the love and prayers of others and he thinks that the treatment for leukaemia is going well. He is grateful that potential donors for a bone marrow transplant have been identified and he is preparing for such a transplant later this year. Please continue to pray for him and his family in this challenging time. Please pray also for Bishop Ruth and the rest of the Bishop's Staff as they take on the oversight of the diocese in his absence.

Growing as a worshipper, a servant and a family

*We pray that 'we might live in love,
as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us'*

(Ephesians 5:2)