

CUTTING EDGE CAMELOT, No 88

Wednesday 10th February 2021

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

Welcome

Welcome to this midweek edition of Cutting Edge Camelot. We continue our series on the Beatitudes. George reflects below on ‘Blessed are those who mourn’.

Scripture Passage

Matthew 5: 1-12

When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. Then he began to speak, and taught them, saying:

“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

“Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

“Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

“Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.

“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

“Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

“Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”

Reflection

Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

We may read that Beatitude, say a mental “It’s good to know that” and then move on to the next one. Or perhaps we may think about it a bit longer and note that it seems to be unlike the other ones. They describe either a person’s character (poor in spirit, meek, pure in heart) or what that person does (peacemaker, stands up for what is right despite persecution). This one describes how a person feels: they mourn, probably because someone they love has died. They are sad, and their reward is to be comforted, so that they feel a bit less sad. Is that really all this Beatitude means?

And then we may wonder why the person who mourns has been singled out for comfort. Why is there no mention of the blind, the lame or the deaf? Don't they need comfort? What’s special about those who mourn?

In St Matthew’s Gospel, Jesus starts his ministry by calling on everyone to “repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is close at hand”. Life in that Kingdom has values and priorities that are very different from those of the world they are living in. It is time for them to re-think how they are living their lives and turn back to God (two ideas contained within the word “repent”).

The Sermon on the Mount comes very shortly afterwards. It follows on from that message, and Jesus introduces it with the Beatitudes.

In his introduction last Wednesday, Tristram quoted Bishop Steven Croft saying that the Beatitudes “offer a portrait of Jesus in eight beautiful qualities ...”. The portrait is of someone whose human life on earth was

lived entirely in obedience to God. The qualities that make up the portrait are those that characterise someone who is living the life of the Kingdom of Heaven.

Bishop Croft then goes on to say that the portrait shows “what it means to be fully human in a complex and ever-changing world.” That’s where we come in.

The Kingdom of Heaven has been breaking in on our world for the past 2,000 years. The consequences have been immense, but there is still a long way to go. Past generations of Christians have passed the baton to us, as Christ’s 21st Century disciples. We seek to live lives that are more and more Christ-like and thereby spread the life of the Kingdom in our own day.

We know we can’t do it in our own strength. We can only do it in the strength that Christ gives us through his life in us. And that takes us to today’s Beatitude.

We probably associate mourning with the death of someone we loved. But death is not the only occasion for mourning. We mourn for our own shortcomings and misfortunes, the job we applied for and didn’t get, the opportunity we didn’t take and now won’t come again, our failures as a parent or in other roles, including as disciples. We mourn when tragedy hits those we know. We mourn disasters in our community or the life of our nation.

Jesus mourned the death of his friend Lazarus. When he entered Jerusalem on a donkey, he mourned what he could see would be the terrible fate of the city and its inhabitants when it was destroyed in AD 70 (Luke 19: 41-44). His mourning goes far wider than ours. He who “bears our griefs and carries our sorrows”, mourns both with all mankind and for mankind.

If we are to live the life of the Kingdom of Heaven, we must expect our mourning to increase. Seeing the world through Christ's eyes will give us an increased awareness of human suffering, and of the wickedness, selfishness and folly that so often cause it, and an increased sensitivity to them. Our mourning for all that is wrong will be the counterpart to our hunger and thirst for all that is right. Such mourning is part of life in the Kingdom of Heaven, as experienced in this world, in a way that to be blind or lame or deaf is not.

We will need to be comforted, in other words strengthened (the "fort" in comfort is the same as the "fort" in fortress). Otherwise the increased occasions for mourning will be too much for us. We will be comforted by the presence of Christ in us and the strength he will give us. This comfort or strengthening will be a blessing, because it will enable us to keep going and more and more be surprised by how great is the joy of being fully human, made in the image of God, and caught up into the life of God.

George

Vimeo

We will be recording and uploading a Vimeo service for next Sunday drawing on the assistance and technical expertise of Dan Gruner and his colleagues.

The Big Church Read

The Big Church Read is a great opportunity to bring Christians together across the country to read books together. It contains online videos, reading plans and discussion questions to enhance the reading experience. The current book chosen for reading and discussion is *Singing in Babylon: Finding purpose in life's second choices* by Jeff Lucas. For more information please see:- <https://thebigchurchread.co.uk/>

Supporting our community

The Lord's Larder

The Lord's Larder is one of our local foodbanks based in Yeovil. In many of our villages we have central collection points for food to be taken to the Lord's Larder and to other local foodbanks. They are immensely appreciative of the support and of food which is given in this way.

However, they also need financial contributions so that they can buy additional food as needed. If you would like to contribute in this way you can do so by setting up a Standing Order in favour of the Yeovil Christian Support Trust. Their bank details are Unity Trust Bank Plc, Birmingham, Sort Code 60-83-01, Account No 20211112. It is possible to increase the value of these donations by claiming Gift Aid.

North Cadbury Church of England Primary School

The school also immensely appreciates our prayers and support in this difficult period.

While prayer remains primary, some of us may be wondering whether we can also help in practical ways. The need for all families connected with the school to be able to buy books for use at home is very pressing in this time of home schooling.

So the school would appreciate donations of book tokens or gift vouchers for this purpose. If you wish to make a donation direct by BACS transfer the School's details are:-

Account Name:- North Cadbury Church of England Primary

Sort Code:- 30-99-98

Account No:- 65255268

Please use the reference 'Lockdown Books'.

On the other hand, you may wish to send any donations to the Parish Office marking any envelopes 'For the School'. They can then be passed on promptly to the school.

If anyone would like to donate to the school some pre-owned books these will also be gratefully received. However, these will need to be of good quality and less than ten years old.

Points for Prayers

- As we see through Christ's eyes that we will both mourn and be comforted
- The restrictions of the third lockdown and sustaining our common life in this time
- Give thanks for progress in the roll out of the different vaccines in combating coronavirus and for the falling rates of infection
- The need for wisdom in the timing of any easing of restrictions
- 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
- Our Bishops (please see notice below)
- For North Cadbury Church Primary School and other local schools as they are unable to open fully at the moment
- 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.

Suspension of services

Services across the Camelot Group have now been suspended as sadly we concluded that it was not possible to hold them safely in the current circumstances. The suspension of services will be kept under review as circumstances change.

Excalibur

The February edition of Excalibur is now online at camelotparishes.co.uk

The Parish Office

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.

An inclusive Communion celebrated on behalf of the benefice

During the third lockdown as in the others Ron and Pam will be celebrating Communion regularly in their home each Sunday at 10.00 am. Please be aware of this because even though no-one can join them they are praying for us all and hope that you will feel included in this act of Communion.

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. He has now received a stem cell transplant. Please pray for the new cells to 'do their bit' and for his continued healing. 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)