

CUTTING EDGE CAMELOT, No 119

Sunday 25th July 2021

'Virtually Church but with some way to go...'

Welcome

Welcome to this Sunday's edition of Cutting Edge Camelot.

Scripture Passages

Ephesians 3: 14-21

For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, ¹⁵ from whom every family in heaven and on earth takes its name. ¹⁶ I pray that, according to the riches of his glory, he may grant that you may be strengthened in your inner being with power through his Spirit, ¹⁷ and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, as you are being rooted and grounded in love. ¹⁸ I pray that you may have the power to comprehend, with all the saints, what is the breadth and length and height and depth, ¹⁹ and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

²⁰ Now to him who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine, ²¹ to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

John 6: 1-21

After this Jesus went to the other side of the Sea of Galilee, also called the Sea of Tiberias. ² A large crowd kept following him, because they saw the signs that he was doing for the sick. ³ Jesus went up the mountain and sat down there with his disciples. ⁴ Now the Passover, the festival of the Jews, was near.

⁵ When he looked up and saw a large crowd coming toward him, Jesus said to Philip, “Where are we to buy bread for these people to eat?” ⁶ He said this to test him, for he himself knew what he was going to do.

⁷ Philip answered him, “Six months’ wages would not buy enough bread for each of them to get a little.”

⁸ One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother, said to him, ⁹ “There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish. But what are they among so many people?”

¹⁰ Jesus said, “Make the people sit down.” Now there was a great deal of grass in the place; so they sat down, about five thousand in all. ¹¹ Then Jesus took the loaves, and when he had given thanks, he distributed them to those who were seated; so also the fish, as much as they wanted.

¹² When they were satisfied, he told his disciples, “Gather up the fragments left over, so that nothing may be lost.” ¹³ So they gathered them up, and from the fragments of the five barley loaves, left by those who had eaten, they filled twelve baskets.

¹⁴ When the people saw the sign that he had done, they began to say, “This is indeed the prophet who is to come into the world.” ¹⁵ When Jesus realized that they were about to come and take him by force to make him king, he withdrew again to the mountain by himself.

¹⁶ When evening came, his disciples went down to the sea, ¹⁷ got into a boat, and started across the sea to Capernaum. It was now dark, and Jesus had not yet come to them. ¹⁸ The sea became rough because a strong wind was blowing. ¹⁹ When they had rowed about three or four miles, they saw Jesus walking on the sea and coming near the boat, and they were terrified. ²⁰ But he said to them, “It is I; do not be afraid.” ²¹ Then they wanted to take him into the boat, and immediately the boat reached the land toward which they were going.

Reflection

It seems in our gospel readings for the last few weeks as if we just have not been able to get away from the crowds. Their presence has felt exhausting and stressful and has highlighted the need for rest. This has often been difficult to find. And in this week's gospel reading the impact of the crowds on Jesus' ministry is once again very significant.

Because of them Jesus keeps moving around, this time going to *'the other side of the Sea of Galilee'*. And yet once again a large crowd comes with Him *'because they saw the signs that he was doing for the sick'*. The attractions and need for Jesus' healing ministry are overwhelming.

And probably by this stage the continued and constant presence of the crowds had simply begun to feel overwhelming. Jesus and His disciples go up a mountain and this might have given them some brief respite. But from the mountain Jesus simply has to look up and He sees a large crowd coming towards Him.

And at this point the crowds present another problem. Apart from their needs for healing how are they to be fed? This seems a quite impossible task.

And that raises the question. What do we do when we are faced with the impossible?

One obvious response might be just to despair and to give up. And yet if we are resourceful people, used to coping with all that life might throw at us, another response at least to begin with is to see how far we might manage to get towards an impossible target. Can we make a good show of it? Can we figure out logically what the best course of action might be?

And this is understandable. It seems to be the starting point for Jesus' disciple Philip. Jesus asks him a question, "*Where are we to buy bread for these people to eat?*" But this seemingly straightforward question is in fact a test. Jesus wants to know what stage Philip and indeed His other disciples have reached in their journey of faith. Have they in fact realised that whatever human resources and gifts they may have it is impossible to do God's work without relying entirely on God's help and power?

However, Philip still thinks that if he simply tries hard enough and comes up with a good idea that this will be enough to meet the challenges that the life of faith presents. And so first of all he considers a very practical and down to earth solution. Why not go out into the shops and buy some bread for all this hungry crowd?

But Philip is also honest and realistic enough to recognise that this solution is not going to work. So in response to Jesus' question Philip presents not an answer or a possible solution but a statement which shows how impossible the whole situation is, "*Six months' wages would not buy enough bread for each of them to get a little.*"

However Philip is still thinking purely in terms of human resources and what these can do. But Jesus calls us to move into an entirely new dimension of life and of faith.

It seems impossible. How to feed all this great crowd? But a recognition of impossibility might not be a sign of despair. It could be a first and necessary step towards acquiring a new perspective on life and on faith. One in which we do not rely on our own limited resources but rather draw on God's limitless resources.

However, as the disciples address the seemingly impossible task of how to feed the crowd, this new perspective does not emerge fully formed and all at once. Rather it begins with a tentative thought and a question. Another

disciple, Andrew, sees someone with some food in the crowd and he begins to wonder ‘What if?’ What if this boy with his five barley loaves and two fish might be the start of something much bigger? Could Jesus work with what this boy brings?

But it must be said that Andrew at this point is not at all sure what Jesus might do with such meagre and fragile resources. For ‘*what are they among so many people?*’

So faith does not start, as some people might think, with all the answers but rather with some questions. Could this be what God wants? Might this possibly work? We approach God with open questions and allow Him to work as He chooses to.

And Jesus’ response is very straightforward. Not dramatic at all. He simply says, “*Make the people sit down.*” The command for people to settle and to prepare themselves to eat is the precursor to the dramatic miracle that is about to take place.

The number of people, about five thousand in all, is mentioned. Once again we are given a sense of the human impossibility of what is about to happen and how little any resources which rely simply on human power and effort could achieve.

But for God nothing is impossible. Jesus’ actions and words continue to be very simple, yet powerful. He takes the loaves and then the fish, gives thanks to God for them and then simply distributes both of them to all those who are seated.

And so the miracle of the multiplication occurs. The seemingly inadequate resources that are offered up to God prove to be sufficient and more to meet the needs of the occasion in a way that no amount of purely human ingenuity and effort could have been.

We are reminded in other words of the immensity of God's love and resources. So great are these that at the end there is much that is left over. Twelve further baskets are gathered, a sign of the abundance of God's provision and generosity.

And our reading from Ephesians also reminds us of the immensity of God's love.

God is the one who gives us the strength which we need through the Holy Spirit. As we are rooted and grounded in love through Christ so we will come more and more to appreciate the full extent of God's love and resources. This love is immeasurable and beyond all knowing. We are invited to be filled with all the fullness of God.

So one of the obvious questions which these passages raise is whether we are working with God's strength or in our own strength?

This question is raised in a different way in the account of Jesus walking on the water which occurs at the end of our gospel passage. Once again the disciples must have been feeling overwhelmed. It is dark and Jesus is not with the disciples. Instead they have to face alone the roughness of the sea and the strength of the wind. It seems that they are facing yet another impossible challenge.

And then? They take Jesus into the boat. The rough seas and strong winds no longer matter because with Jesus in the boat they reach the land in the right place without further delay.

Recently, I too felt overwhelmed. Too many seemingly impossible challenges coming from too many different directions. Perhaps an important point for me was realising that they were impossible to deal with. And so rather than trying I took a break. I took a walk up a hill (not South Cadbury Castle by the way!) and when I came down I felt I could cope. God had strengthened

me. And then without my needing to do anything about them those problems melted away as God worked on other people's hearts.

I wonder. Are we faced with impossible challenges? And where might Jesus be? Could we invite Jesus to be in the boat with us?

Tristram

Points for Prayers

- If we are overwhelmed that we might ask Jesus in prayer to be with us and to give us strength
- For our church life and unity as we move into this new phase of personal responsibility as opposed to legal restrictions
- Continued thanksgiving for care, skill and courage of NHS workers and those in care homes demonstrated throughout the course of this pandemic
- Those whom we know who are facing illnesses of all kinds, those who have recently been bereaved and those suffering as a result of social isolation and in other ways
- Bishop Ruth and the rest of the Diocesan staff as they take on additional responsibility following Bishop Peter's retirement and plan for the future
- For the leavers' service at St Michael's North Cadbury on Thursday 22nd July and for North Cadbury Church School and other local schools as they enter the summer holiday that this might be a period of refreshment and peace
- 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.

Hymn

A well-known hymn celebrating the heavenly bread which Jesus gives us is 'Guide me O thou great Redeemer'.

Tahlia's christening

We had a wonderful time at our daughter Tahlia's christening last Sunday.

A Vimeo link to a video of the christening is available at:-

<https://vimeo.com/577937380/35031e17e9>

Tristram

Services for July

Sunday 25 th July	8.00 am Communion, Blackford
Sunday 25 th July	9.30 am Communion, South Cadbury
Sunday 25 th July	9.30 am Matins, Compton Pauncefoot
Sunday 25 th July	9.30 am Morning Worship, North Cheriton
Sunday 25 th July	11.00 am Communion, North Cadbury
Sunday 25 th July	11.00 am Communion, Holton
Sunday 25 th July	11.00 am Sunday Worship, Yarlington
Sunday 25 th July	6.30 pm Evening Service, Galhampton
Sunday 1 st August	9.00 am Communion, Yarlington
Sunday 1 st August	9.30 am Camelot Matins, North Cheriton
Sunday 1 st August	11.00 am Group Communion, North Cadbury

Excalibur

Excalibur is back in paper form. It contains details of Camelot people, a record of baptisms, weddings and funerals undertaken through the church in the Camelot Parishes. The July edition of Excalibur has also been published online at camelotparishes.co.uk

The Parish Office

If Rob is not in the Office during normal office hours please contact him via email (office@camelotparishes.org.uk) or on 01749 850934.

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)