

CUTTING EDGE CAMELOT, No 121

Sunday 8th August 2021

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

Welcome

Welcome to this Sunday’s edition of Cutting Edge Camelot. Please note that I will be taking some leave over the next two Sundays. So the next edition of Cutting Edge Camelot will be on Sunday 29th August.

Tristram

Scripture Passages

Ephesians 4:25-5:2

So then, putting away falsehood, let all of us speak the truth to our neighbours, for we are members of one another. ²⁶ Be angry but do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, ²⁷ and do not make room for the devil. ²⁸ Thieves must give up stealing; rather let them labour and work honestly with their own hands, so as to have something to share with the needy.

²⁹ Let no evil talk come out of your mouths, but only what is useful for building up, as there is need, so that your words may give grace to those who hear. ³⁰ And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with which you were marked with a seal for the day of redemption. ³¹ Put away from you all bitterness and wrath and anger and wrangling and slander, together with all malice, ³² and be kind to one another, tender hearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ has forgiven you. ^{5:1} Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children, ² and live in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

John 6: 35, 41-51

Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.”

⁴¹ Then the Jews began to complain about him because he said, “I am the bread that came down from heaven.” ⁴² They were saying, “Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How can he now say, ‘I have come down from heaven?’”

⁴³ Jesus answered them, “Do not complain among yourselves. ⁴⁴ No one can come to me unless drawn by the Father who sent me; and I will raise that person up on the last day. ⁴⁵ It is written in the prophets, ‘And they shall all be taught by God.’ Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to me. ⁴⁶ Not that anyone has seen the Father except the one who is from God; he has seen the Father. ⁴⁷ Very truly, I tell you, whoever believes has eternal life. ⁴⁸ I am the bread of life. ⁴⁹ Your ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. ⁵⁰ This is the bread that comes down from heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die. ⁵¹ I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats of this bread will live forever; and the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh.”

Reflection

Relationships need time and care to maintain. Sometimes we can encounter problems. And when we think about such problems we might ask ourselves how they developed. How did they originate?

Sometimes this exercise reveals that the source of the problem was something that seemed very small and insignificant at the time. It may have been a hurried or a misplaced word, an action that was misinterpreted. And this could easily have been resolved through an open and honest conversation at the time. But such a conversation never took place. So there was no quick resolution. In its absence, the incident began to fester in

people's minds and its significance began to grow even to the point where there comes to be a major rift and people cease to be on speaking terms.

In our gospel readings we continue to reflect on Jesus' feeding of the five thousand and the passage in John's gospel known as the Bread of Life discourse which follows. And here we see one example of how opposition to Jesus grows from what seem to be relatively innocent and insignificant beginnings. In our reflection on last week's passage the crowds who were pursuing Jesus were hungry for more miraculous signs. However, they were unwilling to accept the sign of the feeding of the five thousand which had already been given to them. Instead of trusting Jesus they keep on testing, questioning and demanding further explanations.

But this does not amount as yet to outright opposition. The crowd is just questioning and perhaps Jesus will produce an answer that will satisfy them. However, this week we see how questioning and the failure to trust develops into an attitude of hostility, even though such hostility is still expressed in quite a covert way.

They begin to complain, to mutter and murmur because they are offended by Jesus' claim to be the bread from heaven. And as they consider what seems to them to be an outrageous claim they find an easy way to knock it down. After all, Jesus is someone they have known well all His life. They know His background and His family. This is Jesus the son of Joseph. They know His father and mother. It is ridiculous for Him to claim that He has come down from heaven. It simply isn't true.

But in thinking in this way they are making a mistake which is all too easily made. That mistake is to think that because we know someone's outward circumstances we also know them inwardly, who they truly are. But of course we do not. Even people whom we think we know well after many years of close relationship can still surprise us. We think we know how they will react but then suddenly and unexpectedly they show a new side to their

character, one of which we were previously unaware. It is, after all, only God who can know the heart.

But Jesus does know the heart. Even though these complaints and grumbles have not been expressed openly, He knows that they are going on. And He tells them to stop it. These complaints are a form of outright opposition and failure to recognise who Jesus truly is.

As we look at our passage from Ephesians, we find a similar dynamic at work. Here too problems in relationships grow and become magnified from small beginnings.

Be angry but do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger,

The beginning in this case is anger. Now anger is not in itself a sin. We can be angry but we can choose not to sin. If we are hurt by someone, for instance, it is natural and even inevitable that we ourselves will become angry. The question that faces us, however, is not whether to be angry or not but what to do with our anger. And here we do have a choice. This choice is about going God's way or our own way.

Our own way and temptation is to begin to harbour this anger in our hearts. We probably all know what happens when we do this. The anger and the hurt from which it springs begins to grow all of its own until the small incident becomes one which assumes major proportions in our minds and hearts. As we nurture anger so it grows.

And the solution? The other way, God's way? This is not to pretend that the anger and the hurt do not exist. They do and it is no use or help to pretend otherwise. Rather we have to acknowledge what we are feeling before God and then release our feelings to God. Or as Paul puts it not to let the sun go down on our anger. This is of course very wise and practical advice. For if we do let the sun go down on our anger we are unlikely to get

a good night's sleep and when we wake up in the morning we will find that our anger has grown.

And harbouring anger then leads to problems multiplying and divisions forming to the point where reconciliation seems impossible. We have, as Paul puts it, made 'room for the devil.'

None of this so far is very encouraging or inspiring. Is it really inevitable that these problems which arise from relatively small beginnings will simply grow in such an alarming way? Fortunately not. There is an alternative, God's alternative.

How positively can we tackle these simmering problems of relationships in our lives? Paul's message of not letting the sun go down on our anger is a very practical one. But perhaps we need to start further back. For his words although universally applicable are addressed to those who have faith.

So I think our starting point needs to be to allow God to strengthen our faith. For as this happens so we will be given the grace and strength to take the practical actions that are needed.

Paul's whole message of what it means to follow Christ is summed up in this passage by these words,

Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children, and live in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

As beloved children of God, those who have a relationship with God we are encouraged to imitate God and to imitate Christ.

What does this mean? It means a life of sacrificial love. This is the sacrificial love which Christ demonstrates by offering Himself to us on the Cross. Our first need to is to receive this love for ourselves and when we have done this then we are able to offer that love to others, to live in love.

Or we can put it in another way in the words of Jesus Himself. It is faith in Jesus that we need. It is this which will sustain us spiritually. And it is this which will provide us with the catalyst and motivation for the change which we need in our lives. As Jesus puts it,

“I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats of this bread will live forever; and the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh.”

Tristram

Points for Prayers

- That we will have the grace and strength to be imitators of God and of Christ
- For our church life and unity as we move on into the rest of the summer
- Continued thanksgiving for the care, skill and courage of NHS workers and all others who work to contain the spread of this pandemic and to be agents of healing
- 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
- For weddings planned for the autumn
- 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 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

‘When we walk with the Lord’ is a hymn which encourages us to trust and obey Jesus Christ, a quality which needs to be at the heart of our faith.

Services for the rest of August

Sunday 8 th August	9.30 am Communion, Galhampton
Sunday 8 th August	9.30 am Communion, North Cheriton
Sunday 8 th August	9.30 am Matins, Blackford
Sunday 8 th August	11.00 am Sunday Worship, Holton
Sunday 15 th August	9.30 am Communion, Compton Pauncefoot
Sunday 15 th August	11.00 am Sunday Worship, North Cadbury
Sunday 15 th August	6.30 pm Evensong, Yarlington
Sunday 22 nd August	8.00 am Communion, Blackford
Sunday 22 nd August	9.30 am Communion, South Cadbury
Sunday 22 nd August	9.30 am Matins, Compton Pauncefoot
Sunday 22 nd August	9.30 am Morning Worship, North Cheriton
Sunday 22 nd August	11.00 am Communion, North Cadbury
Sunday 22 nd August	11.00 am Communion, Holton
Sunday 22 nd August	11.00 am Sunday Worship, Yarlington
Sunday 22 nd August	6.30 pm Evening Service, Galhampton
Sunday 29 th August	8.00 am Communion, Blackford

Sunday 29th August 9.30 am Family Service, North Cheriton

Sunday 29th August 11.00 am Communion, Maperton

Sunday 29th August 6.30 pm Evensong, Galhampton

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 August edition of Excalibur has now been published online at camelotparishes.co.uk and on each parish's A Church Near You webpage.

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)