

CUTTING EDGE CAMELOT, No 161

Sunday 5th June 2022

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

Welcome

Welcome to this Sunday’s edition of Cutting Edge Camelot. This Sunday is the occasion both of Pentecost and of the Platinum Jubilee. I understand that Ron is bravely trying to bring these two themes together in his sermon at Yarlington. Less ambitiously perhaps, I focus in my reflection below on the Jubilee and its Christian significance.

Scripture Passages

Proverbs 8: 1-16

Does not wisdom call, and does not understanding raise her voice?

² On the heights, beside the way, at the crossroads she takes her stand;

³ beside the gates in front of the town,

at the entrance of the portals she cries out:

⁴ “To you, O people, I call, and my cry is to all that live.

⁵ O simple ones, learn prudence; acquire intelligence, you who lack it.

⁶ Hear, for I will speak noble things,

and from my lips will come what is right;

⁷ for my mouth will utter truth; wickedness is an abomination to my lips.

⁸ All the words of my mouth are righteous;

there is nothing twisted or crooked in them.

⁹ They are all straight to one who understands

and right to those who find knowledge.

¹⁰ Take my instruction instead of silver,

and knowledge rather than choice gold;

¹¹ for wisdom is better than jewels,
and all that you may desire cannot compare with her.

¹² “I, wisdom, live with prudence, and I attain knowledge and discretion.

¹³ The fear of the LORD is hatred of evil.

Pride and arrogance and the way of evil and perverted speech I hate.

¹⁴ I have good advice and sound wisdom; I have insight, I have strength.

¹⁵ By me kings reign, and rulers decree what is just;

¹⁶ by me rulers rule, and nobles, all who govern rightly.”

Matthew 5: 1-12

When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. ² Then he began to speak, and taught them, saying:

³ “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

⁴ “Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

⁵ “Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

⁶ “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

⁷ “Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.

⁸ “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

⁹ “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

¹⁰ “Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

¹¹ “Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. ¹² 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

This occasion of the Platinum Jubilee gives us a chance to reflect on and give thanks for the long reign of our Queen. A Platinum Jubilee is indeed a unique occasion, even Queen Victoria only managed a Diamond Jubilee! And indeed the Queen herself has said that at the outset of her reign she did not expect to be on the throne for such a long time.

And so for this unprecedented length of time she has withstood the pressures of being in the public eye. She has been the public face of our nation for so long and she has needed to balance these responsibilities with those of her own family.

And her public appearances have not just been ceremonial ones. Among the tributes paid this week were those which remember the diplomatic impact of her reign such as the part which she played in the Irish peace process which at a personal level was very costly.

So how has the Queen been able to sustain this weight of responsibility? If we hold a responsible position for just a short time we may be able to get away with our own shortcomings because, after all, we are not going to be around that long.

But over the long haul there is nowhere to hide. And over the long haul we are all bound to make mistakes. That is part of being human. And yet our continued trust and respect for someone depends not on perfection nor on technical skills but on that person's character. If we know and trust that character then we will continue to support that person through the inevitable ups and downs of life. And so even after seventy years the Queen continues to enjoy very high levels of support even among those who might not be counted as natural supporters of monarchy.

So what values and character might be at the heart of the Queen's long reign? Her Christian commitment has been very evident and so it is to those Christian values that we turn.

Prominent among these is the need for wisdom. In our passage from Proverbs we are reminded of how essential this quality is for those who rule. As the personified figure of Wisdom declares,

*By me kings reign, and rulers decree what is just;
by me rulers rule, and nobles, all who govern rightly.*

In our public life today and indeed in our private lives there are many different and competing voices clamouring for our attention. In the Book of Proverbs the voice of wisdom is contrasted with the voice of folly, a voice which entices us towards selfish behaviour and short term gratification. But to follow the voice of folly leads to death. By contrast the call of wisdom leads to lasting life and to true happiness. Which will we choose, wisdom or folly?

The one who rules effectively needs to choose wisdom. And so wisdom cries out on the heights and at the crossroads for rulers and everyone else to listen to her. In wisdom we place other people's interests before our own. In wisdom we make right choices between different courses of action.

And wisdom is also bound up with a concern for truth and justice. This reminds us of the importance of public speech and how it needs to reflect an underlying reality. And also in our times we may think of how easily social media, though potentially a great force for good, can be used to distort truth.

Wisdom is based on relying on God rather than ourselves. It is perhaps a particular temptation for those who enjoy high office or who have special gifts and talents to become proud and arrogant. These are expressions of self-reliance.

Our New Testament reading, the Beatitudes, likewise reminds us of how important humility is in God's sight. Those who are blessed are the poor in spirit and the meek, not those who think well of themselves and are concerned to protect their own position. People like that will have a concern for others and be touched by their misfortunes and mourn over them.

Their inner character will be pure and so the way that they conduct themselves will be for the benefit of others. They will have a desire for justice and mercy and will also be peacemakers who bring reconciliation where there are long standing areas of conflict and difference.

Surely these are characteristics which we yearn to see in those who occupy positions of authority. And surely they are also at the heart of an effective and truly successful reign and rule.

The beatitudes are a portrait of what life looks like when we accept the call of Christ. We are to live in a new way and to be part of the kingdom of God. Often this kingdom has been described as an upside down kingdom. Why is this?

In the kingdom of God, all the qualities that we might naturally value such as wealth, prestige, power and self-assertion are overturned. And in their place we find opposite qualities such as meekness, gentleness and a recognition of our own fallibility and weakness are given centre stage.

And when values are turned upside down inevitably this can result in opposition and even persecution. Naturally we would shrink from such unpopularity and pain. However, when we live in this new light of the kingdom of God then instead of drawing back we are given the courage and strength to continue on our way and indeed to accept such persecution with joy.

So as we think of the Queen's long reign we think also of the part that wisdom, humility and her Christian faith have played in underpinning and sustaining that reign.

And yet as we think about the Queen we think also about ourselves. We may say to ourselves that surely we are not rulers or leaders. Our lives do not have that kind of significance. And yet if we examine our lives we will find different ways in which we ourselves rule and take responsibility. For many of us this may be through our family or through our work. Or it may be through the voluntary positions and responsibilities which we take on.

One important aspect of being a leader is to act as an example, encouragement and inspiration to others. So if we see wisdom and humility as sustaining the Queen's rule how does this affect the way that we exercise our own responsibilities?

Tristram

Points for Prayers

- Reflecting on the Queen's reign and being motivated to follow Christ and to seek wisdom and humility
- Peace and justice to prevail in the conflict between Russia and the Ukraine and for humanitarian efforts to help all those harmed by the conflict
- Platinum Jubilee events and services already held and to be held
- All those affected by the cost of living crisis
- Those whom we know who are facing illnesses of all kinds and have recently been bereaved
- For our new Bishop, Rt Revd Michael Beasley

- For Elliscombe House in Higher Holton now reopened and for its first residents
- For North Cadbury church school and our other local schools as they prepare to continue their school terms after half term
- Prayers and thanksgiving for contributions to the foodbanks and for those helping to take these to the foodbanks.

Hymn

A hymn to be sung at the Jubilee services and which speaks of having Christ at the heart of our lives is 'Be thou my vision'.

Services for this week and next

Sunday 5 th June	9.00 am Communion, Yarlington
Sunday 5 th June	9.30 am Platinum Jubilee Service, North Cheriton
Sunday 5 th June	11.00 am Platinum Jubilee Service, North Cadbury
Sunday 12 th June	9.30 am Communion, Galhampton
Sunday 12 th June	9.30 am Communion, North Cheriton
Sunday 12 th June	9.30 am Matins, Blackford
Sunday 12 th June	11.00 am Sunday Worship, Holton

Quiet Day

There will be a Quiet Day on Saturday 2nd July from 10.00 am to 4.00 pm at Woolston Manor Farmhouse Barn, Woolston, North Cadbury, BA22 7BL (Nigel and Ursula's barn). The purpose of this day is to provide some time and space for reflection and prayer concerning the future of the Camelot

benefice. Drinks will be provided, but bring a sandwich, a notebook a pen and a Bible. It will be led by Jan-Rebecca Brown, a licensed lay Minister in Salisbury Diocese.

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 June edition of Excalibur has now 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)