

CUTTING EDGE CAMELOT, No 165

Sunday 3rd July 2022

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

Welcome

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

Scripture Passages

Luke 10: 1-11, 16-20

After this the Lord appointed seventy others and sent them on ahead of him in pairs to every town and place where he himself intended to go. ² He said to them, “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest. ³ Go on your way. See, I am sending you out like lambs into the midst of wolves. ⁴ Carry no purse, no bag, no sandals; and greet no one on the road.

⁵ “Whatever house you enter, first say, ‘Peace to this house!’ ⁶ And if anyone is there who shares in peace, your peace will rest on that person; but if not, it will return to you. ⁷ Remain in the same house, eating and drinking whatever they provide, for the labourer deserves to be paid. Do not move about from house to house.

⁸ “Whenever you enter a town and its people welcome you, eat what is set before you; ⁹ cure the sick who are there, and say to them, ‘The kingdom of God has come near to you.’ ¹⁰ But whenever you enter a town and they do not welcome you, go out into its streets and say, ¹¹ ‘Even the dust of your town that clings to our feet, we wipe off in protest against you. Yet know this: the kingdom of God has come near.’”

¹⁶ “Whoever listens to you listens to me, and whoever rejects you rejects me, and whoever rejects me rejects the one who sent me.”

¹⁷ The seventy returned with joy, saying, “Lord, in your name even the demons submit to us!”

¹⁸ He said to them, “I watched Satan fall from heaven like a flash of lightning. ¹⁹ See, I have given you authority to tread on snakes and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy; and nothing will hurt you.

²⁰ Nevertheless, do not rejoice at this, that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven.”

Reflection

For the Jews, seventy is one of those special numbers. In fact, in the Book of Numbers, we hear how Moses was hard pressed looking after the Israelites by himself, so God told him to choose seventy men he could trust, and God would fill them with the Holy Spirit and they would help him run Israelites Inc. Their job was to spread the leadership, and to be there for the people when Moses himself was gone.

Much later, the Jews wanted a translation of their scriptures into Greek, because so many of them spoke Greek. They appointed seventy scholars to do the work, and that’s why the Greek Old Testament is called the Septuagint. Incidentally, according to Jewish tradition, all the scholars worked independently, and all their translations turned out identical, which they reckoned was God’s way of saying they’d got it right. Their mission was to make the word of God available to a much larger audience - to reach the parts that the Hebrew scriptures couldn’t reach.

So Jesus appointed seventy - some manuscripts say seventy-two, but in the circumstances, seventy seems more likely - and gave them a mission. And here’s an aside worth exploring. On the day of Pentecost, when God’s Holy

Spirit filled the first Christians with the power to get out there and share the Good News with the world, we're told about a hundred and fifty of Jesus' followers were gathered together. Suppose most of the seventy were married. That's a hundred and forty. Add on the Apostles, and that's about a hundred and fifty.

Anyway, Jesus' seventy had the same brief - to share leadership, to carry on when Jesus was gone, and to make the Word of God, (and that's Word with a big W) available to a much larger audience. To tell about Jesus, to witness what they'd seen, and to show his power. I'll come back to that in a minute.

The customs the Jews had in those days are reflected in Jesus' instructions. A traveller could expect hospitality - a bed, a meal - wherever he went. And Jesus points out that they aren't sponging - they are earning their keep, because they're bringing God's good news to people. Then it was a Jewish custom, if they'd been to Gentile country - among non-Jews - to shake off the dust from their shoes when they came back to their home turf. A way of showing they were Jewish, and they rejected Gentile ways. Jesus says to the seventy, in effect, that they are going to be the elders of a new Israel - his followers are the new chosen people - so people who reject Jesus and his kingdom are the new Gentiles. Shake off their dust and move on.

But here's the important bit. Especially in the context of our worship, where we regularly pray for those who are sick. Remember, Jesus didn't tell the seventy to pray for the sick. He told them, *heal the sick!* He was giving them authority, and he was giving them real power. His power to heal the sick. It was one thing to recount Jesus' teachings, and tell the stories Jesus told. It was one thing to tell people *Jesus fed five thousand people out of a lunch basket, and I was there.* Or to say, *I saw Jesus heal a blind man.* But it was quite a different order of things to say, *In the name of Jesus of Nazareth, get up and walk, or receive your sight, or be healed from leprosy.* That's what would make people sit up and take notice, and wonder who Jesus is, what's he got, and can I have some, please?

OK, now I accept I can't heal the sick. Actually, if you look at Matthew's version of this bit, Jesus sends out his followers saying, *heal the sick, and **raise the dead!*** We definitely can't do that. I don't know about you, but I've never tried. We're far more used these days to healing happening through surgery, and medicine. Which is why I always give thanks to God, and pray for doctors and nurses, because whether they realise it or not, all healing comes from God, and they are the agents of his healing power.

But if we can't personally show God's healing power, we can still show his love, his care and his concern.

Like the seventy, we might well be like lambs among wolves. We might need more tact than the seventy, because the name of Jesus still isn't welcome everywhere. St Francis of Assisi sent out his followers with the instructions to *preach the Gospel at all times, and if necessary, use words*. I once met a young Christian at a party, and I wasn't in a dog-collar, and his first words to me were, *Have you accepted our Lord Jesus Christ as your personal friend and Saviour?* And my friend Cyril, who was allowed to interview a murderer serving life in Wandsworth prison, opened the conversation with those same words. It wasn't helpful.

Jesus gave us plenty of examples, in parables, and in his own personal relationships, as to how to show the love of God, so that people who met him felt that they had had an encounter with God. His way was to accept, no matter what a person's reputation was. Jesus never took notice of what other people said about anybody, only how he found them. His way was to befriend even those who would find friends thin on the ground - the tax collectors and the prostitutes- even a Roman officer. Jesus gave people personal attention - remember the deaf and dumb man? Jesus "took him aside from the crowd" and dealt with him one to one. He gave them all the time they needed, like the woman with the haemorrhage, when he was in such a hurry to get to the house of Jairus. These were the ways Jesus made people feel special, that they were loved, and cared about. And this isn't

hard stuff - it's what we can all do. How might we convince people that God loves them, unless we show them our own love? And how can we show people God's forgiveness unless we show them our own. As Jesus said to his followers, *if you forgive anyone's sins, they're forgiven. If you withhold that forgiveness, they're not forgiven.*

We can't heal the sick, unless we're doctors. But we can share the Good News. If necessary we can use words.

Ron

Points for Prayers

- Showing the love of God to others through the way in which we live
- Rising number of new covid cases
- 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
- Those whom we know who are facing illnesses of all kinds and have recently been bereaved
- For the Deanery in considering Pastoral Reorganisation
- 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 continue their school terms
- 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 North Cadbury this Sunday is 'We have a gospel to proclaim.'

Services for this week and next

Sunday 3 rd July	9.00 am Communion, Yarlinton
Sunday 3 rd July	9.30 am Camelot Matins, North Cheriton
Sunday 3 rd July	11.00 am Group Communion, North Cadbury
Sunday 10 th July	9.30 am Communion, Galhampton
Sunday 10 th July	9.30 am Communion, North Cheriton
Sunday 10 th July	9.30 am Matins, Blackford
Sunday 10 th July	11.00 am Sunday Worship, Holton

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 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)