

# **CUTTING EDGE CAMELOT, No 212**

**Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> June 2023**

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

## **Welcome**

Welcome to Cutting Edge Camelot this Sunday.

## **Scripture Passages**

*Exodus 19: 2-8a*

They had journeyed from Rephidim, entered the wilderness of Sinai, and camped in the wilderness; Israel camped there in front of the mountain.

<sup>3</sup> Then Moses went up to God; the LORD called to him from the mountain, saying, “Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob, and tell the Israelites:

<sup>4</sup> You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles’ wings and brought you to myself. <sup>5</sup> Now therefore, if you obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession out of all the peoples. Indeed, the whole earth is mine, <sup>6</sup> but you shall be for me a priestly kingdom and a holy nation. These are the words that you shall speak to the Israelites.”

<sup>7</sup> So Moses came, summoned the elders of the people, and set before them all these words that the LORD had commanded him. <sup>8</sup> The people all answered as one: “Everything that the LORD has spoken we will do.”

*Matthew 9: 35-10:8*

Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and curing every disease and every sickness. <sup>36</sup> When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep

without a shepherd. <sup>37</sup> Then he said to his disciples, “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; <sup>38</sup> therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.”

<sup>10:1</sup> Then Jesus summoned his twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to cure every disease and every sickness.

<sup>2</sup> These are the names of the twelve apostles: first, Simon, also known as Peter, and his brother Andrew; James son of Zebedee, and his brother John; <sup>3</sup> Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; <sup>4</sup> Simon the Cananaean, and Judas Iscariot, the one who betrayed him.

<sup>5</sup> These twelve Jesus sent out with the following instructions: “Go nowhere among the Gentiles, and enter no town of the Samaritans, <sup>6</sup> but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. <sup>7</sup> As you go, proclaim the good news, ‘The kingdom of heaven has come near.’ <sup>8</sup> Cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons. You received without payment; give without payment.

## **Reflection**

Last week, we looked at the moment when the apostle Matthew first met Jesus and responded to His call. It was a moment of grace that changed the course of his entire life and one that he always remembered, as is recorded in Matthew’s gospel.

And although when we remember Matthew we might first of all think of Matthew’s gospel and his status as one of the twelve apostles, Matthew himself never forgot where he came from or how much he owed to Jesus and to the grace of God displayed in Jesus.

For, in today’s gospel reading, Matthew does indeed feature in the list of the twelve apostles. But, in the list contained in Matthew’s gospel, a telling little

detail is included which is absent from the corresponding lists in Mark's and Luke's gospel. For he adds after his own name the simple description 'the tax collector'.

The profession of a tax collector which Matthew practised before he became a disciple of Jesus was a despised one. Tax collectors were regarded in those times as collaborators with a foreign, occupying power and as cheats who enriched themselves at other people's expense.

Matthew never forgot where he came from. He owed everything to Jesus who had called him to be a disciple and who was unconcerned by Matthew's notorious social and religious reputation. It was a moment of grace.

And yet life moves on. However powerful such moments might be and however deeply we remember them, each succeeding day brings with it fresh challenges to be met. So, it is natural to ask 'What happened next in Matthew's journey of faith?'

The answer to that question is given in this morning's gospel reading. It begins by describing the nature of Jesus' own ministry. He goes around preaching the good news of the kingdom and healing every kind of sickness.

All of this is underpinned by a wide and deep compassion. He sees the crowds, how helpless and harassed they are. In His compassion, they seem to Him like sheep without a shepherd. They lack someone to give them the continuing spiritual nourishment which they need.

And so, a further challenge arises. For even though Jesus was God in human form, He was not, in His earthly ministry, able to be everywhere all the time. If the immensity of the needs that He saw around Him was to be met, there was only one way to do this. He needed to train up other people to be shepherds to those who were in spiritual and physical need, other

people who would, by the help of the Holy Spirit, continue and extend His work.

And so, as He tells the disciples that the harvest is plentiful but the labourers are few, He also encourages them to pray that God might send labourers out into the harvest. Indeed, the disciples themselves were to be part of the answer to this prayer as they were commissioned and given authority by Jesus to heal and to preach. At a later point in their ministry these disciples would in their turn call further people to become disciples of Jesus.

In this way, the grace that the disciples had themselves received was to be passed on to others. For, as we do this, those powerful memories of grace in our own lives remain fresh and alive for us.

When we turn to our Old Testament passage from the book of Exodus, we find something of the same dynamic at work. A powerful moment of grace is followed by a calling into a lifetime and lifestyle of service.

For the people of Israel, the Old Testament people of God, their moment of grace had come when God had rescued them from the oppression and humiliation of their slavery in the land of Egypt.

The sense of freedom and release which they experienced at that time is vividly encapsulated in the image of their being carried into God's presence on eagles' wings. Through Moses, God reminds them that they had been brought to Himself. And this is the all important starting point of grace in their journey of faith. At that point, they are not required to do anything, they simply need to receive God's profound and powerful love for them.

However, the question of 'What happened next?' is still an important one for them. For, as they are carried on eagles' wings, we are reminded that they are on a journey. There is not simply the exhilaration and freedom of

enjoying being transported by eagles, this journey has a destination and an underlying purpose.

And the call and purpose which God has for His people is described in two further images. They are to be a treasured possession and a priestly kingdom.

There is an immense tenderness in the phrase 'treasured'. God truly values and indeed treasures us just as a parent does with a child.

But we are also God's 'possession'. As we think of some of our own treasured possessions, maybe our home or an item which has great sentimental value for us, we naturally take care of these and protect them.

And yet these possessions also serve a purpose for us. We are to enjoy them but we also want to use them for the purpose for which they are made. Perhaps we want to put them on display so that other people can also see and enjoy them.

And the purpose for which God wants to use us is seen in the next image of being a priestly kingdom. A priest is someone who is a go between and a representative. A priest both represents God to other people and also represents other people before God. A priest is like a living advertisement of faith. God puts His treasured possession on display for others to enjoy. As people see us as disciples of Christ, so too they catch a glimpse of God for themselves.

And so, we as God's people are to be a holy nation, people who are dedicated to God and God's purposes and whose lives are for that reason attractively distinctive and different.

All of this is not forced on us by God. Rather it requires our own willing consent. Moses sets God's calling and purposes before God's people and they all answer him as one, 'Everything that the Lord has spoken we will do.'

Reading those words reminds me of when I ask couples in a wedding service, whether they will be faithful to one another as long as they both shall live. The required answer to that question is 'I will'. For it is a decision of will which keeps us loving both through good times and through bad.

And as disciples we too will encounter in our journey of faith difficult, perhaps seemingly impossible challenges. What keeps us going in these times is our decision of will to commit our lives to Christ.

Yet perhaps there is another dynamic which is also at work in difficult times. A decision of will to keep going with God is undoubtedly important but at the same time God may still be carrying us on eagles' wings.

We may not always recognise this. Sometimes at funerals the poem 'Footprints' is read. As we look back at our lives, we can see two sets of footprints in the sand, our own and God's. And yet there are occasions when we can only see one set of footprints. Why is this? The answer which the poem gives is that these are those difficult moments in our lives when Christ has been carrying us even though we have not been known this at the time.

But through all of this we are a kingdom of priests and God's treasured possession. As such we are put on display in order to draw those whom we encounter into their own life of faith. So when people look at us how much do they see of Christ? And how far do we pass on to other people the grace that we ourselves have received from Christ?

*Tristram*

## Points for Prayers

- Showing God's grace to others through God's strength
- Victims of Nottingham stabbings
- Resolution to industrial disputes
- Conflict between Russia and the Ukraine and those who are refugees from this conflict
- Those whom we know who are facing illnesses of all kinds and have recently been bereaved
- For Elliscombe House in Higher Holton and its residents
- For teachers, children and parents of North Cadbury church school

## Hymn

One well known hymn set for this Sunday is 'Love divine, all loves excelling.'

## Services for this week and next

Sunday 18 <sup>th</sup> June	9.30 am Communion, Compton Pauncefoot
Sunday 18 <sup>th</sup> June	11.00 am Communion, Maperton
Sunday 18 <sup>th</sup> June	11.00 am Sunday Worship, North Cadbury
Sunday 18 <sup>th</sup> June	6.30 pm Evensong, Yarlington
Sunday 25 <sup>th</sup> June	8.00 am Communion, Blackford
Sunday 25 <sup>th</sup> June	9.30 am Communion, South Cadbury
Sunday 25 <sup>th</sup> June	9.30 am Matins, Compton Pauncefoot
Sunday 25 <sup>th</sup> June	9.30 am Morning Worship, North Cheriton
Sunday 25 <sup>th</sup> June	11.00 am Communion, North Cadbury
Sunday 25 <sup>th</sup> June	11.00 am Communion, Holton

Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> June

11.00 am Sunday Worship, Yarlinton

Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> June

6.30 pm Evening Service, 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 June edition of Excalibur has now been published online at [camelotparishes.co.uk](http://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](mailto: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)