

Daily Reflections



Sunday 25 February 2018
(Year B)

To

Saturday 3 March 2018

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Scripture: Genesis 22: 1-2, 9-13, 15-18; Psalm 115, Romans 8: 31-34; Mark 9: 2-10

Jesus took with him Peter and James and John, and led them up a high mountain apart, by themselves.

There was no obvious reason for Jesus to take anyone with him – we know that he often took himself off to quiet places to pray alone. Perhaps it was to show these particular disciples that he had particular trust in them. Or that he wanted them to learn more about prayer. Or that he guessed something was about to happen and wanted witnesses. We do not know but it is a good reminder that there are times for solitude – but also times when it is good to pray with others.

- How do you prefer to pray – alone or with others?
- If you had to choose up to three people to accompany you to a special place to pray with you who would they be? And why them?

Thinking about how you prefer to pray – alone or with others – consider how you might do a bit more of it this coming week. If you have identified a few people who seem to be spiritually in tune with you think about inviting them to a quiet time – maybe ending with a coffee!

Monday 26 February 2018

Scripture: Daniel 9: 4-10; Psalm 78; Luke 6: 36-38

Jesus said, *'Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap; for the measure you give will be the measure you get back.'*

If Jesus is right about the good measure being put into our laps – he is implying something about what is expected of us in terms of our giving. If truth be told, very few of us give to that extent – even to those closest to us. If we think in terms of what we give to God, we would probably have to admit that we fall far short of a generous measure of time and energy devoted to him. Yet, we have Jesus'



Give sometime today to thinking about the earth – its peoples – its animals – its plants – its atmosphere. Give thanks for the abundance of God’s gracious giving and pray for whatever you feel you need in order to bear the part of the harvest entrusted to you.

Saturday 3 March 2018

Scripture: Micah 7:14-15, 18-29; Psalm 102; Luke 15:1-3, 11-32

While the son was still far off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion; he ran and put his arms around him and kissed him. Then the son said to him, “Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.”

The story of the prodigal son is deservedly well-known. It is a powerful story of love, betrayal, loss, resentment and much more – all told within a couple of hundred words and three key characters. The moment Jesus describes here is probably the most poignant. The father sees his son and, just maybe, until this point, had himself been angry and waiting for the son to come back and give him a piece of his mind. But he sees his son and what he sees fills him with compassion – and everything changes. A reconciliation neither of them expected, perhaps, but sorrow meeting compassion gives both a new way forward.

- What do you think the father was planning to say to his son when he got back?
- What do you think he saw that filled him with compassion?

Rembrandt’s painting of this moment is very powerful. It was painted hundreds of years ago but it is as if the moment has lasted through all the time since – almost as if the moment is touched by eternity. You might like to spend some time today with the painting – just gazing at it and letting it ‘speak’ to you – probably without words. This link takes you to a page about the painting with links to the image itself.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Return_of_the_Prodigal_Son_\(Rembrandt\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Return_of_the_Prodigal_Son_(Rembrandt)) .

assurance that however generous we are, we will never be outdone in generosity.

- How much would you say you give in terms of your giving to God in terms of prayer –devotion – service to him and to others?
- What gets in the way of your being generous towards God?

Think today of something you could do that is that bit more generous towards God – maybe a little more time in praise or thanksgiving – or a bit more time spent in serving others. Set yourself a goal and do what you can to meet it.

Tuesday 27 February 2018

Scripture Isaiah 1:10, 16-20; Psalm 49; Matthew 23:1-12

Jesus said to the crowds and to his disciples, *‘The scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses’ seat; therefore, do whatever they teach you and follow it; but do not do as they do, for they do not practise what they teach.’*

We have all met people like those Jesus is warning about – and, if we have not met them, have seen them or read about them. He is, in a way, giving us permission to be critical – in the sense of weighing up what people say and do. Where we see a mismatch, he does not tell us to condemn or be judgemental – but to judge wisely what to follow. If someone is teaching the truth, then we trust to that, even if we determine that the person’s actions are not always in accord with it.

- When have you seen or heard people acting in ways that differ from what they teach or say?
- When has a mismatch between someone’s teaching and their actions caused you discomfort or posed serious questions for you?

If you have been in a situation where what someone has taught or preached or said and the way they have acted has caused you disquiet. Bring any painful memories or questions into a time of honest prayer-conversation with the Lord. If you have not been in such a situation, pray for the wisdom to judge wisely between people’s words and actions.

Wednesday 28 February 2018

Scripture: Jeremiah 18: 18-20; Psalm 30; Matthew 20: 17-28

Jesus called them to the disciples and said, *'You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones are tyrants over them. It will not be so among you; but whoever wishes to be great among you must be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you must be your slave; just as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many.'*

Even though this passage is taken from towards the end of Matthew's gospel, it is clear that the disciples are still strongly influenced by the desire for honour and power. Over and again, Jesus has told them that his own honour will be dragged through the mud – he will be utterly powerless in the face of the hostility against him. But the disciples are unable to grasp just what this means. Jesus knows that there is still a long way to go before they understand him – but persists in pointing out that power and honour in the kingdom are not the same as on earth.

- Why do you think the disciples were so reluctant to accept Jesus' very different understanding of power and honour?
- Do you think things have changed over the centuries?

Spend time today reflecting on Jesus' teaching on what makes someone honourable or powerful – and how easy you find it to accept for yourself. Pray for the grace to be someone like Jesus – someone who serves and does not expect to be served.

Thursday 1 March 2018 – St David

Scripture: Philippians 3: 8-14; Psalm 1; Matthew 5: 13-16

Jesus said, *'Let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.'*

At the beginning of Lent, Jesus spoke of not parading our good works – and yet, today, he is speaking of the way in which it can be useful for people to see them.

The difference would seem to be where the credit lies – whether our good works point to God or to ourselves. With someone like St David, Patron Saint of Wales, the distinction seems to have been clear. He let his light shine among the people of Wales in such a way that helped them to see God at work through him and to come to faith in him.

- What is the difference between parading good works –and letting people see them and find God at work?
- When has someone's good works helped you to see God shining through them?

Give sometime today thinking about the power of good works to change people's lives and to introduce them to God. What might you do or say or simply be for someone else to help them to come to know the Lord? Make a note of your thoughts in your journal if you are keeping one.

Friday 2 March 2018

Scripture: Genesis 37:3-4, 12-13, 17-28; Ps 104; Matthew 21:33-43, 45-46

Jesus began his parable, *'There was a landowner who planted a vineyard, put a fence around it, dug a wine press in it, and built a watch-tower. Then he leased it to tenants and went to another country.'*

It is clear that the landowner has invested a lot of time, money and energy in the vineyard. He probably bought the land – cleared it of weeds and the worst of the stones and then went on to build the wall, watch-tower and wine press (which in itself required considerable digging). At the point of completion, the landowner entrusts it to tenants. There are different ways of interpreting this parable but one might be to see the landowner as God, investing massive energies in creating a home for humanity, building an environment in which they can thrive and bring forth great harvest. And then, he entrusts it all to them...

- What are the implications of God entrusting the earth to human beings?
- What is the harvest that God hopes to receive from us?