



Sunday 21 June 2020 Second Sunday After Trinity

Thought on Matthew 10.24-39 - Canon John

Gospel Reading

Jesus summoned the twelve and sent them out with the following instruction: 'A disciple is not above the teacher, nor a slave above the master; it is enough for the disciple to be like the teacher, and the slave like the master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebul, how much more will they malign those of his household! So have no fear of them; for nothing is covered up that will not be uncovered, and nothing secret that will not become known. ***What I say to you in the dark, tell in the light; and what you hear whispered, proclaim from the housetops. Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell.***

Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground unperceived by your Father. And even the hairs of your head are all counted. So do not be afraid; you are of more value than many sparrows.

Everyone therefore who acknowledges me before others, I also will acknowledge before my Father in heaven; but whoever denies me before others, I also will deny before my Father in heaven. Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth; I have not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; and one's foes will be members of one's own household. Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; and whoever does not take up the cross and follow me is not worthy of me. Those who find their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it.

Sermon

Perhaps I have become guilty of filleting, as above I have highlighted a couple of sections from today's Gospel passage. Often we take selective passages the other way; ones that are more palatable and support our own more modern western liberal worldview but today I have highlighted in the other direction.

Some of the teaching of Jesus is tough and we should acknowledge that. Teaching like in today's passage we might often hastily skip over or quickly overlook if we can. Perhaps we would rather have a Jesus that is comforting and easy-going all of the time and whom nobody really dislikes! The way Jesus is seen in some portions of scripture is not so sensitive and some of us in church would rather smooth over these portions in case we alienate or offend anyone.

This might make us guilty of over sanitising the teachings of Jesus by taking some of the passages that have difficult things to deal with and re-interpreting them to suit own ends.

Really, of course, we should be balanced in all things and not reinvent God in our own image however tempting that may seem. God is bigger than our understanding, he made us rather than the other way around and that has rather annoyed human beings since Adam. We can never fully explain or understand God and yet he knows everything about us that can be known. It is a mystery and like many of those it is better to be acknowledged and then to move on rather than desperately try to seek a solution.

Taking this view point means that we don't have to be apologists for a God that is bigger and better than us. We – as fallible Christians – try and interpret the way of God and yet we fall short, as we do in everything we attempt, in his name or not.
