

...Similarly, we need to encourage each other when we're not doing what we should, encourage each other when we seem to have lost our mojo for God and for sharing our faith...of course not everyone can talk to us like that, well just tell them to bog off, but each of us have people e respect and who respect us and are able to do that because we have walked with them and journeyed with them...

When we recognise that were afraid of sharing our faith and address what causes that, we able then to do something about it...when were scared of what others may think, its then that we need to remind ourselves that actually its more important what Jesus thinks of us than people, because its him that were going to spend eternity with along with all those who were taken with us on our faith journey.

For so many, theological knowledge is all they have, they don't have a real friendship with Jesus which is why they find it so hard to translate the truths of the bible into a living experience. Its then that we realise how important of spending time together in Christian community, of learning together, loving and challenging each other, so that knowledge becomes an experience which then translates to us being faithful disciple-making disciples.

A story is told of a young boy who was walking with his grandfather along a beach. It was covered with tiny star fish that had washed ashore unable to get themselves back.

Every so often the grandfather would pick one up and throw into the sea. "Granddad there are thousands of them why bother throwing one or two of them back, it won't make any difference"

Picking up another and throwing into the sea, the boys granddad said "it makes a difference to that one"

There are so many people who don't know Christ, and faced with such a huge harvest we might be tempted to let someone else do the sharing, but if we share our faith to just one other in our lifetime who goes on to have a friendship with Jesus, then for all eternity it will have made a difference to that one.....

Amen

St Mary's Sanderstead 7.7.19 3rd Sunday of Trinity
The life of a disciple Luke 10:1-20
Fr. Grant Cohen

Jesus has just finished making sure that His followers understand what being a disciple is all about. He introduced them to the concept of cost. We learned last week that for us there will be costs as well. For some the cost may be greater and of a different type than others, but all will experience the cost of discipleship. There should be a cost. The cost means it's worth something.

Today, we see Jesus sending a portion of His followers on ahead to basically do what John the Baptist did, to prepare the way of the Lord.

I took a wedding yesterday of a friend that I used to work in with in the salon, knowing she was sure to comment on how long my hair was I phoned 'Jam hair' to book in for a quick haircut, I asked for my usual stylist but she wasn't available so I had to have someone else.

I must say I was a bit anxious as I'm sure so of you would be to have someone that I didn't know, especially as being a hair stylist myself I'm a bit particular about how my hair is cut.

There was once a barber who lived in a small town. Everyone went to him, but one day a new salon opened advertising that they gave haircuts for only £3. Slowly but surely, everyone left the barber in favour of the cheaper salon and his business was at risk of closing.

His accountant spent some time exploring ways in which he could try and boost his business, and told the barber that he'd chat with him the next day. The following morning the barber met him again and his accountant pulled out a large sign for him to hang above his shop. It read "we fix £3 haircuts"

Just because there is competition doesn't mean that the competition is any good. We live in a world that battles for our attention, there are different newspapers, all with a certain take on the news, different tv channels, different philosophies and different faiths....

In our text, Jesus sends out 72 people in pairs, and their time isn't going to be easy, hence the imagery of being sent as lambs among wolves, but despite this, they are to share what they themselves have received.

I watched a tv programme on Thursday evening called the most hated church in America, and while I certainly didn't agree with the things they were preaching, I have to say I admired the spirit of the young people who associated themselves with the church, who when asked by Louis Theroux why they did not marry, said their mission was to important, the days to few for them to concern themselves with less important things.

I wonder what the church would look like if we spent less time on less important things and more on building the kingdom of God.?

How many times have we heard the good news of Jesus in a sermon a book, or a conversation? The like hood is many, many times...and yet so often we still struggle to articulate the truth of what God has done for us in a simple, and coherent way. I wonder if I asked you to turn to your neighbour and in 60 seconds explain why you're a Christian and why they should be one too, if you could or would do it I think that for many people there isn't a priority for lost people, people who are not Christians and maybe that's because deep down we don't think they are lost, that eventually the love of God will get them and so we don't pray for our friends and family to become Christians, we don't talk to them about our faith unless were asked...

Another reason we wrestle with evangelism is because of what others will think of us?

What if they don't like me or my family anymore?

What if talking about Christ makes seeing my neighbours awkward?

What if they lump me together with Westboro Baptist church, the church that I mentioned earlier who spread a message of hate.

While at a theological college in Yorkshire we did a bit of door to door, talking to people about faith, and God in their lives, believing us to be Jehovah's witnesses we were spat on, threatened with dogs that would be set upon us, doors slammed in my faces, sworn at, called bigots, believe me, when we take the gospel to the world, we literally are lambs to the slaughter at times.

Sometimes we forget what it was like to live without hope, to feel lost and apart from Jesus, or maybe we've never had that experience ourselves at all and therefore don't recognise that, that's what it's really like for those who do not have a faith in Christ...that they are lost and without hope.

Rarely consider that those who do not know will one day not be in the presence of the Lord. We might say we care, but how do we reflect that in how we convey our faith. When talking to the Christians living in Rome, The apostle Paul says "I could wish that I myself were accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers who do not know him.

If everyone got to heaven, then why the need to share the good news, why does Jesus place such an emphasis on us going out?
if there's more than one way to enter heaven why send Jesus in the first place, why add another way if the existing one is good enough...

I met with a family at the beginning of the week, and the man who had died had been a D-day veteran. And his son told me that while many people fled at the thought of what might await them on the beaches or Normandy, which for some meant inevitable death, is dad knew the stakes to be too high and went, courageously and fearfully.

I saw Satan fall like lightening Jesus tells his disciples, he wants them to realise that there is a cosmic battle going on, and a war being waged...against the earth the prize being the souls of human kind...

In the programme that I watched with Loise Theroux, the church were absolutely convinced of their call, to spread the good news, their whole lives committed to sharing a message, but their message was of a God that was pleased to bring judgement, an angry and vengeful God who called his followers to spread a message of hate and Louis asked them a great question, isn't the message of Jesus one of love and compassion...

In sending out the twelve, and the 72, they are to replicate the ministry of their master, as are we, one which doesn't paper over the fact that as followers of Jesus we are to live a certain way, but one which mirrors the grace of God, his compassion and love...

There's no doubt that eternal life and death are the issue when it comes to Jesus and today's gospel reading, but today's culture had made it all too easy to pass of religious opinion as if we were choosing a flavour of ice cream.

God isn't so cold as to allow such important matters to be left on a whim... Strange as it is, the world that accuses God of narrowness and yet in offering his Son, he has removed all the obstacles that stand in the way of us having a relationship with him.

What seems as a narrow way in Jesus is in fact a door that leads to blessing, and the disciples know that it's not the width of the door, but rather where it leads.

I read a great quote while preparing for today's message, "the church will either evangelise or fossilise.

In the book of acts after Peter and John are released from prison, were told that the disciples gathered to pray for God to give them boldness to speak his word. So, if the early church needed to pray for boldness, how much more do we need to pray similarly when we meet together?

In Paul's letter to Timothy he reminds him of what he had learned and encourages him to press on and to be faithful to the message that has been entrusted to him. If Timothy, a student of the apostle Paul, a faithful servant, preacher and teacher — needed to be reminded to keep going, how much more do you and I need to be reminded.

I talked a little about what it means to be a disciple of Jesus last week, and how the fruits of the Spirit are reflected in us when we walk the life of a disciple. In his letter to the Galatians Paul opposes Peter because his behaviour were not in accordance with the gospel, can you imagine that...Paul telling St. Peter that he's not in a right place with the Lord.....

But he did....