

Discussion and Reflection Questions

Week beginning Sunday 13th of February 2022 (Epiphany 6C)

Getting started Questions:

- What stood out for you in the sermon or other spiritual input you heard, read or saw this week?
- What has been some of the challenges of the week just gone?
- Where have you seen God at work this week?

1st Reading: Jeremiah 17.5-10

⁵ Thus says the Lord: Cursed are those who trust in mere mortals and make mere flesh their strength, whose hearts turn away from the Lord. ⁶ They shall be like a shrub in the desert, and shall not see when relief comes. They shall live in the parched places of the wilderness, in an uninhabited salt land. ⁷ Blessed are those who trust in the Lord, whose trust is the Lord. ⁸ They shall be like a tree planted by water, sending out its roots by the stream. It shall not fear when heat comes, and its leaves shall stay green; in the year of drought it is not anxious, and it does not cease to bear fruit. ⁹ The heart is devious above all else; it is perverse — who can understand it? ¹⁰ I the Lord test the mind and search the heart, to give to all according to their ways, according to the fruit of their doings.

Questions:

- “Cursed” is a strong word. How does the idea of someone being “cursed” reconcile with your understanding of a forgiving God?
- Verse 7 is a powerful verse. What is the difference between trusting “in the Lord” and being someone “whose trust is the Lord”?
- What are the things that get in the way of having our trust in the Lord?

Psalm 1

- ¹ Blessed are they
 who have not walked in the counsel of the ungodly:
 nor followed the way of sinners,
 nor taken their seat amongst the scornful.
- ² But their delight is in the law of the Lord:
 and on that law will they ponder day and night.
- ³ They are like trees planted beside streams of water:
 that yield their fruit in due season.
- ⁴ Their leaves also shall not wither:
 and look, whatever they do, it shall prosper.
- ⁵ As for the ungodly, it is not so with them:
 they are like the chaff which the wind scatters.
- ⁶ Therefore the ungodly shall not stand up
 at the judgement:
 nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous.
- ⁷ For the Lord cares for the way of the righteous:
 but the way of the ungodly shall perish.

Questions:

- This Psalm starts with the word “blessed”, it is central both to the Old Testament reading and the gospel. What do you think it means to be “blessed”?
- The image of a tree is central to this Psalm. How do you relate to that image?

- What parts of your life, situation, past, or relationships would you like to be blown away and scattered like chaff?

2nd Reading: 1 Corinthians 15.12-20

12 Now if Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead, how can some of you say there is no resurrection of the dead? **13** If there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ has not been raised; **14** and if Christ has not been raised, then our proclamation has been in vain and your faith has been in vain. **15** We are even found to be misrepresenting God, because we testified of God that he raised Christ—whom he did not raise if it is true that the dead are not raised. **16** For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised. **17** If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. **18** Then those also who have died in Christ have perished. **19** If for this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied. **20** But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have died.

Questions:

- What do you understand by “resurrection” in how it applies to Christ and how it relates to believers?
- Have you experienced examples of “resurrection” in your life or the life of someone you know?
- The resurrection of Jesus is and has been a stumbling block for many who just can’t believe it. Have you struggled with this and how do you respond to others you know who struggle to believe in resurrection?

Gospel: Luke 6.17-26

17 He came down with them and stood on a level place, with a great crowd of his disciples and a great multitude of people from all Judea, Jerusalem, and the coast of Tyre and Sidon. **18** They had come to hear him and to be healed of their diseases; and those who were troubled with unclean spirits were cured. **19** And all in the crowd were trying to touch him, for power came out from him and healed all of them. **20** Then he looked up at his disciples and said: ‘Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God. **21** ‘Blessed are you who are hungry now, for you will be filled. ‘Blessed are you who weep now, for you will laugh. **22** ‘Blessed are you when people hate you, and when they exclude you, revile you, and defame you on account of the Son of Man. **23** Rejoice on that day and leap for joy, for surely your reward is great in heaven; for that is what their ancestors did to the prophets. **24** ‘But woe to you who are rich, for you have received your consolation. **25** ‘Woe to you who are full now, for you will be hungry. ‘Woe to you who are laughing now, for you will mourn and weep. **26** ‘Woe to you when all speak well of you, for that is what their ancestors did to the false prophets.

Questions:

- There are many similarities with this passage and ‘the sermon on the mount’ in Matthew 5. What makes this passage different?
- The reading from Jeremiah uses the word “cursed” as does a passage from Leviticus 26 & Deuteronomy 28 which this section of Luke is often compared to. But Luke uses the word “woe” which in the Greek is an exclamation of grief similar to “alas”. What is there to grieve or worry about if you are full, laughing and people are speaking well of you?
- In previous weeks we’ve seen Jesus’ priority for the poor, the oppressed, blind and captive. How does this passage connect with Jesus teaching in Luke 4?

Prayer of the week

Let your merciful ears, O Lord, be open to the prayers of your humble servants; and that they may obtain their petitions make them to ask such things as shall please you; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.