

Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost (Ordinary 27)
03-10-2021
St Cuthbert's Anglican Church – Tweed Heads

Job 1:1, 2:1-10 Job suffered, but didn't curse God

Psalm 26 Lord, I have done your will, save me.

Hebrews 1:1-4, 2: 5-12 God speaks through Jesus
Jesus died for everyone

Mark 10: 2-16 Jesus teaches about Marriage and Divorce
Jesus blesses the little Children

Introduction

Today I would like to focus on our sentence of scripture from the gospel reading:-

Whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will never enter it. (Mark 10.15)

So, let us look at accepting Jesus like a child, through the lense of the scriptures we have heard today.

Readings

Let's begin by looking at the central messages from our scripture readings today.

Both the reading from Job and Psalm 26 talk about an unwavering faith in God. A faith that doesn't doubt, but trusts implicitly. Young children often look to their parents like this. They haven't yet learnt that people can let us down. Young children have to trust those who care for them as they can't care for themselves. Job was greatly afflicted, yet he refused to curse God. With all the challenges that Job went through, in the end Job learned that "God was enough". The psalmist talks of trusting in the Lord and not wavering.

In the portion of scripture from the letter to the Hebrews today, the writer starts by saying that previously God was made known to them through many and varied ways by the prophets. But now we can know God through the person of Jesus, and Jesus has come for all Humanity. The way to stay true to God is through Jesus.

In our gospel reading from Mark, Jesus talks about the importance of marriage and the importance of children.

The readings seem to be talking to us about integrity and about relationships.

In light of this, let's look at what Jesus had to teach about having a relationship with God through him, and how we are to come to God.

Like a Child

Jesus says the only way we can come to him is like a child.

How did the culture of Jesus' time treat children? As we heard last week, children were to be "seen and not heard". Children were valued in that they would grow up to be functioning and productive adults. We hear today how Jesus' own disciples were chasing the children away.

So, what is a little child like? Well, they often trust adults implicitly, because they have too. I can recall going to the local swimming pool with our children, when they were quite young. They would allow me to throw them into the air and have all sorts of fun. They didn't question whether it might be a bit dangerous. Our son once jumped into the pool, when I wasn't quite paying attention, and I had to quickly get to grab him from going under. He trusted that I was there for him. But children can also be silly and naughty and have short attention spans.

And how are adults different to children? Well, as adults we can often make our own decisions and be a lot more independent than children.

Is Jesus saying we need to be silly, or mindless? I don't think so.

I think Jesus by saying we need to accept him like a child accepts adults. Jesus is saying that we need to trust implicitly like a child does. Children must trust adults to look after them, they don't have a choice. We need to trust Jesus like that!

Not because we don't have a choice, but because we know it is the best choice we can make for our lives.

And when we trust Jesus like that, we'll be better enabled to live our lives as his followers.

Having integrity, and living in a way that honour's God, will only be something we can achieve if we first place all of our faith, and all of our hope, and all of our trust in God, and what God has done for us through the person of Jesus.

The Kingdom of God

Today Jesus talks about “receiving” and “entering” the “Kingdom of God”.

Jesus uses the term “Kingdom of God”, to describe God’s rule over our world. It has a present and current tense, as Jesus has come, he has died and rose again, and is with us now. But it also has a future tense, as Jesus will come again and draw all those who have followed him, to God.

Being part of the “Kingdom of God” is to acknowledge God’s rule over our lives, and it gives us the wonderful assurance that we cannot be separated from God’s love for us.

Conclusion

Today’s Gospel reading is all about human relationships. Jesus is talking about how marriage is to be respected and embraced as important. Jesus is talking about treating children well, as they too, belong to God.

But the most important relationship we can ever have, is a relationship with the God who created us.

I believe it is only when we acknowledge what Jesus has done for us, and the relationship he seeks to have with us, that we will truly be able to live well in relationship with others.

The challenge for us from the readings today, is to look at our relationships, and look not at what we are getting out of them, but rather at what we are putting into them.

How are we seeking to accept Jesus like a little child, so that we can live and take our part in God’s Kingdom?