

14 Jun 2015 Pentecost 3

1 Samuel 15:34-16: 13

Psalm 20

2 Corinthians 5: 6-17

Mark 4:26-34

[Proper 6B/Ordinary 11B/Pentecost 3, June 14, 2015](#) Textweek

Next Sunday we will hold our Annual General Meeting [AGM], an opportunity for us to get together and review and renew our experience and our expectations of 'being' Church.

This week's readings seem auspiciously chosen to give us encouragement and direction as we reflect in preparation for the AGM.

The first reading narrates a significant movement and the establishment of a new authority; the kingship of Saul is to be replaced with that of David; and the narrative is crafted to give us the impression that this is a Divine course correction, that it is the work of God.

We read that "*the LORD was sorry that he had made Saul king over Israel*" and so now gives Samuel directions for finding and anointing a new king.

In the process of discerning this new king, we see from verse six onwards that what Samuel thinks is an appropriate choice is then rejected by 'the Lord'; and that illuminates the process of discernment for us; "the LORD said to Samuel, "*Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature.*"

The *appearance* or how things look, and *the height of his stature* the measurements we take, these are not necessarily the factors to discern and/or determine outcomes; rather "*the LORD looks on the heart*"; the very source of life, the place of deepest desire, the symbol of love and the very beat that maintains the activity of life.

The narrative encourages us to look beyond the everyday and to consider the life giving activity of being Church; we're also encouraged, and given permission, to course correct and try again rather than holding on to what was previously chosen and accepted in the past.

The prayer of the Psalmist echoes and underlines that which is affirmed in the first reading;

"May the Lord... remember all your offerings";

remember all that is given and received and then the prayer continues;

"May the Lord... Grant you your heart's desire: and fulfil all your purposes."

In the week ahead we might give time and thought to discerning that which is our *heart's desire* and also that which would be a fulfilling of *all [y]our purposes*.

It is a challenging reflection, the process of discerning both 'desire' and 'purpose'; it is not a common practice and yet it is very much a part of our inner being; and perhaps it is the very 'hook' that holds us together as Church.

We can follow this reflection process for ourselves and it is equally challenging to discern the 'desire' and the 'purpose' of the Church; and part of that challenge is complicated by the changing landscapes of the world in which we live.

Our desires and our sense of purpose, and also the lack of these, give shape to our being, and in turn give shape to how we see the world; likewise how we see the world shapes our understanding and so our appreciation of who we are. Perhaps this is why, like Samuel, we are so readily 'distracted', or led, by outward appearances; and why we invest so much in the measurement of proof to support our worldview.

The encouragement in the first reading comes from being given the Divine perspective; *"the LORD looks on the heart"*; and for us to discern 'from the heart' we need to consider where we give life and where we sustain life.

In the second reading, Paul underlines the 'newness' of being *"in Christ"*; *"So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!"*

And then in the gospel reading we hear two parables about seeds, and what grows out of that which is planted; what more do we need to hear in preparation for our AGM, and what better backdrop could we paint for discerning what we are and where we are going?

Together, today's readings point us in a direction that will be helpful next week when we *review and renew our experience and our expectations of 'being' Church*.

We'll consider what is at the 'heart' of our Being church; and what desires and purposes are sown in our hearts..

We can appreciate the movement from Saul to David and look at the movements we might realise here..

And we can be open to the reality of being 'in Christ' and perhaps imagine ourselves as a community, in the heart of community, that is creative of *a new creation*.

We each and all have a part to play in tomorrow's unfolding; for some that will be a prophetic and visionary activity, for some it will involve much time and effort; and some will be distracted by the present and the past almost unaware of tomorrow's unfolding, some will want the past to be replayed, for they see only an ending in the future; and some are caught in a timeless pain or struggle so that each new day never seems to bring the light of dawn with it...

Regardless of the part we play, being here, involves us in a common future; and being Church is a commitment, and an orientation toward a Divine future, a future that is "in Christ".

As part of our preparation for next week's meeting, we might also then be aware of all that we participate in, and all we can give thanks for, and be mindful of the enormous task that is involved in being Church in today's world.

The image of the church in the world is somewhat tarnished, it has certainly changed over the centuries, and likewise our image of the church is also open to change.

The image of the sower on the cover of the service sheet might well be an image of the Church, sowing the 'kingdom' of tomorrow, not Saul's kingdom, nor David's kingdom, but the *kingdom of God*.

In Octavia Butler's book 'Parable of the Sower' she shares some thought provoking ideas that again underline the enormity of our 'being church';

"God is Change, and in the end, God prevails. But God exists to be shaped. It isn't enough for us just to survive, limping along, playing business as usual while things get worse and worse."

"Why is the universe? To shape God. Why is God? To shape the universe."

"We are Earthseed. The life that perceives itself changing."

We will have an opportunity to share our understanding, 'our image' of being church; and it is helpful to share the images we each have so that we can more fully appreciate the common; for in communion we are very much in the place that is beyond our individuality; we are what we claim to be: the Body of Christ....