

Seventh Sunday of Pentecost 3 July 2016

2 Kings 5: 1-14; Psalm 30; Galatians 6: 1 – 18; Luke 10:1-24

[2 Kings 5:1-14; Psalm 30; Galatians 6:\(1-6\), 7-16; Luke 10:1-11, 16-20 from Vanderbilt](#)

[Proper 9C / Ordinary 14C / Pentecost +7 Jul 3, 2016](#) from Textweek

(Day after Federal Election)

Yesterday and today, the past and the present; and this week both yesterday and today, Saturday and Sunday, provide us with an opportunity to consider the future and the part that we play in the creation of every tomorrow.

We're offered quite different processes and perhaps we should look at them both before we determine exactly the part that we will play.

Yesterday, we came together, were handed sheets with various scriptures, various writings that spoke of the promise of tomorrow, and then we gave our name in order to receive the papers of creation, we then had to number a few boxes, place the papers into a box, like our offering, and that was our part done; except for the sausage sizzle on the way out that would have attracted many who were somewhat hungry..

Consider how this felt for you; did you come away with a real sense that you had fully given of yourself into the recreation of life, our future and future of humanity?

Today we are again given papers to consider, writings that speak of a promise for tomorrow; the Old Testament, the New, and the Gospel all vying for attention; we claim our presence here in our responses to the liturgy, because this process was invented before most people could write; we then make our offering, and receive food to fill our hunger.

The process has some of the same mechanics, and so we should compare the different feelings we have and also consider one strategic difference, yesterday's process finished once we had left the polling booth; in today's process the realisation is very much given into our hands and that process both continues and is given direction in our sending out.

Perhaps we might look at the three readings today and see if like yesterday's scriptures any one of them stands above and apart from the others, or were they written with a completely different spin. One of the things yesterday could learn from today, is that the future is grounded in cooperation and not competition; although

each of today's readings comes from a different time and place, they all seek to illuminate a common tomorrow, they resonate with each other rather than against each other; and so let's leave yesterday behind, and seek to more fully embrace the process of creation that is being illustrated today.

One of the difficulties we immediately face, a bit like yesterday, is that we have to look closely at what is being presented to us; we have to look beyond the face value of what is being presented to us; this is not a fast food menu at a drive through, it is not a simple jobs and growth bumper sticker, and the leprosy narrative in the first reading is not an exaggerated Medicare scare; today's readings have some real substance that is well worth teasing out.

The gospel opens with;

"After this the Lord appointed seventy others and sent them on ahead of him in pairs to every town and place where he himself intended to go."

This sounds like an accurate account of events, even the number being sent out has been recorded for us; however that's a 'yesterday's' evaluation; and to be fair in the process we encountered yesterday, we had to be mindful of the numbers because somewhere, so we were told, we would encounter a black hole.

Today we are looking at a much deeper and richer process, one that is not budget driven; in order to appreciate what this opening sentence is saying we have also to know the understanding that it would have for its first audience.

And that will take us back to the book of Genesis, and 'coincidentally' to chapter 10 of Genesis which contains "The Generations of Noah" or what's also called the "Table of Nations". This is a descriptive account of the world following the flood, the world of recreation; and it contains the names of seventy nations. When we appreciate this 'common knowledge' of the intended audience we can now read the meaning of that first line in the gospel.

Jesus appointed 'seventy others'; enough to cover the whole world,

"and sent them on ahead of him in pairs to every town and place where he himself intended to go."

They do not walk alone, they go out as companions into the whole world, the world of re-creation; unlike yesterday there is no mention of border security and no fear of aliens, for they are being sent

"where he himself intended to go."

This is not a 'let's look after ourselves' policy for the future, it is an orientation that is inclusive of all; and deep down we all know the reality and truth that comes when we look beyond our own small world, we are very much part of a much bigger story; and that story does not have a 'Brexit' invitation to retreat from our part in the story.

What is stunningly unexpected in this new orientation is what comes next;

"He said to them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few"; this is a movement into negative unemployment that is even better than yesterday's promise of 'jobs and growth'.

When we open our eyes beyond the borders of self-interest we will see that there is plenty for us to do, we each and all have a valuable part to play in the unfolding of tomorrow.

This gospel 'how to vote' narrative encourages us with underlining, by twice repeating, a refreshing new vision for tomorrow;

"The kingdom of God has come near to you."

It is a vision that makes a plebiscite on same-sex marriage look archaic; here we are being brought into the oneness of humanity with God, we are being sent into the place where Christ

"himself intended to go."

The story also gives us an insight into the outcome;

"17 The seventy returned with joy";

and we might wonder if there are even seventy that will say the same about yesterday's process!

There is no acceptance speech in this process and no 'one' is declared a winner rather the process is made complete with a prayer of thanksgiving, what we in our party call a Eucharist; and in that prayer of giving thanks we hear:

"I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and the intelligent and have revealed them to infants..."

And for a deeper understanding here we need only remind ourselves, or read through, the story of Naaman, from the Old Testament reading. It is a delightfully simple moral folk-tale that will one day make it to the Festival of Perth program. it tells a story of the rich and powerful,

"the wise and the intelligent",

those with negatively geared mortgages and tax off-set superannuation packages; and it identifies their dis-ease; and it tells of those who bring life, new life and who cleans from dis-ease, the servants; and these are the "*infants*" who hold tomorrow in their hands.

Finally, and complimenting the other two readings we have the words of St Paul, and I sometimes wonder if he was named after us; for he really is a man in the middle, caught between the traditions of the past and yet glimpsing and striving for the vision of tomorrow.

He was a real party political hack, so well versed in the policies of yesterday; and then he, almost literally, 'saw the light'; and he offers us a discerning consideration as

we now contemplate the path of re-creation, and the unfolding of tomorrow; it is a consideration that fits well both Saturday's process and Sunday's process;

"Do not be deceived..... for you reap whatever you sow."

Some will try and spin that around to say, look at all that you have, you must be good and have done well; but this discerning consideration is all about tomorrow, it is a contemplation for us to help us discern the vote that we are going to invest ourselves in.

"You reap whatever you sow"

is a telling formula that does not fit any individual, for at an individual level we can often think that we are not subject to the effects that we create, however it is a very proven formula when applied to the whole, and a sobering reminder that we do each and all play a part in creations unfolding.

From Saturday's process Australia will get the government it sowed; the real question is what will get from all that we invest in today?

It is also a stunning motivational mantra; just think; we can reap whatever we sow.

Peter Humphris