



Peters Green News Sheet Issue No: 28

Sunday 20th September 2020

'Give thanks to the Lord, call on his name'

Psalm 105 : 1 - 6 Matthew 20 : 1 - 16

This Sunday's Gospel reading is the parable of the 'Workers in the Vineyard'. The landowner goes out early in the day and hires workers. The usual daily wage is agreed. Then three hours later he goes again to the market place and invites others to join his workforce, but this time he promises to 'pay what is right'. He goes again at the sixth and ninth hours, with the same agreement.

Finally at the 'eleventh hour' he finds 'still others standing around'. He asks why they have been standing 'all day doing nothing'. The reply is, the sad, 'Because no one has hired us'. So they come and work for the last hour of the day.

When the owner comes to give the wages, he starts with those who had been hired last and all receive the same full day's wage. Those who have worked all day grumble, as they now had expected more. The owner replies that he has treated them fairly and comments, 'Or are you envious because I am generous'.

This Parable is a very relevant illustration as it involves those who work long hours and those who are unemployed. We pray for those whose work and responsibility has increased in the current situation and for those who are facing business failure, redundancy and perhaps lengthy unemployment. We hear each day on the news of another 2,000 or 3,000 workers affected; remembering that each one represents a worried family with difficult situations to face. And we are very aware of our local situation as it is linked to Luton airport. My family, like many others came to this area to find work. My parents and grandparents came from the Depression hit northeast in the 1930s. They found a secure life for their families with firms in Dunstable and Luton.

However, the Parable of the Workers is not really about work it is about God's Kingdom.

It begins ...'for the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to find workers for his vineyard'. In the previous chapter Jesus has welcomed the little children saying, 'the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these'. (Matt. 11 : 14) then a rich young man found he could not give up his wealth to follow Jesus. And then rash Peter bleats, 'We have left everything to follow you! What then will be for us?'(Matt. 11 : 27)

Jesus gently points out that there is much to receive in His kingdom. The disciples are thinking of themselves, but Jesus is thinking of 'unseen' others saying, 'many who are last will be first'. Then he

tells our parable to illustrate the point.

Here we see a Lord who knows and understands our situation and who is willing and able to provide for our needs. In some ways it echoes the parable of the Prodigal, with the Father looking eagerly for the Lost Son; who is desperate for work and food, but even more for the Father's loving arms. And both parables show thanksgiving for the undeserved mercy of a loving God.

This week's psalm focuses on giving thanks. It reminds us to give thanks 'as we call on his name' and to 'rejoice' as our hearts 'seek the Lord'. Our hymn exhorts us to 'give thanks with hearts and hands and voices' and we have the assurance that whatever our situation; our 'bounteous God' will 'keep us in his grace and guide us when perplexed'

Or as the psalm puts it, 'Look to the LORD and his strength'.

God bless you,

Pam

Now thank we all our God,
With hearts and hands and voices,
Who wondrous things hath done,
In whom His world rejoices;
Who, from our mother's arms,
Hath blessed us on our way
With countless gifts of love,
And still is ours to-day.

O may this bounteous God
Through all our life be near us,
With ever-joyful hearts
And blessed peace to cheer us;
And keep us in His grace,
And guide us when perplexed,
And free us from all ills
In this world and the next.

All praise and thanks to God
The Father now be given,
The Son, and Him who reigns
With them in highest heaven;
The one eternal God,
Whom earth and heaven adore;
For thus it was, is now,
And shall be evermore.

