

Trinity 1; Proper 6

14/06/20

*Lord, Take my words and make them yours,
so that each of us would hear from you. Amen.*

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I don't know about you, but there are times when I read a passage from the bible and a word or a phrase will immediately speak to me about what is going on in my life...it's like God's sending me a personal message or a 'love' letter.

And there are other times when I read a passage from the bible and...

well nothing speaks to me...

it's like the postman has walked past my house or my email inbox is empty.

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And that's what happened when I first read the Gospel passage for today.

I could find nothing in it that spoke to me or, dare I presume, would speak to you.

For much as we would like to, most of us are not able to **go**, to be **sent** by Jesus.

Even though the Lockdown restrictions have been eased a little there are still many limitations we have to observe.

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And then, several hours later God drew my attention to the beginning of verse 36

“When he (Jesus) saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless”

During the past couple of weeks our TV screens have shown us crowds of people who were ‘harassed and helpless’ following the brutal death of George Floyd in Minneapolis on the 25th May.

And the question that surely hangs in the air as we reflect on those scenes in the light of this passage from St Matthew’s Gospel is;

What is Jesus calling us to do in response?

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Let’s return to the text

Jesus saw the crowds and had compassion...

Or as another translation puts it

'He was moved with compassion to the depths of his being'

Or even, as it says in 'The Message'

'his heart was broken'

So this is not Jesus just saying 'I pity them'; it's Jesus being moved in the depth of his being because of what he saw.

As we read the Gospels we find Jesus
‘moved to compassion’ by the world’s pain

He was ‘moved to compassion’ when
he encountered a sick person

He was ‘moved to compassion’ when
he encountered those in the grip of
demons.

Time and time again, when Jesus
encountered pain and suffering, he longed
to ease that pain and suffering; to bring
healing and wholeness.

Again, as we read the Gospels we find
Jesus ‘moved to compassion’ when he
encountered sorrow;

when he encountered those who were
hungry;

when he encountered those who society
marginalised or treated unfairly.

And when Jesus was ‘moved to compassion’

He noticed the person

He acknowledged the person and their pain

He listened to the person

The crowd that Jesus saw wanted release from the oppression of the Roman occupying force.

The crowds that we have seen on our TV screens are also seeking release, albeit from a different form of oppression.

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We will all have to make our own individual response to what we have witnessed; but I would suggest that whatever it is, it should be based on God's love as demonstrated in the life of Jesus.

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I end today with a prayer which Ade Eleyae, our Diocesan Equality Adviser brought to my attention

A Prayer from **Bishop David Hamid:**

God of justice,

*In your wisdom you create all people
in your image, without exception.*

Open our eyes

*to see the dignity, beauty, and worth of
every human being.*

Open our minds

*to do the hard work of learning what
racism is, and is in us.*

Open our hearts

*to repent of attitudes, behaviours, and
speech which demean others.*

Open our ears

*to hear the cries of those wounded by
discrimination.*

*Fill us with courage that we might seek
to heal wounds, build bridges, forgive
and be forgiven, and establish peace
and equality for all in our communities.*

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

