

Sunday Thought

6th September 2020 23 in Ordinary Time

Readings

Exodus 12: 1 - 14

Psalm 149

Romans 13: 8 - 14

Matthew 18: 15 – 20

A Third Person in the Cab!



Jesus said: *Whenever two of you on earth agree about anything you pray for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. For where two or three come together in my name, I am there with them.*

His words must be among the most often quoted scripture texts yet the meeting for prayer often remains the least well attended. I have been in many prayer groups where I believe the members have taken Jesus' words literally - *'three, or even just two!'*

That is very often the result of personal experiences of tediously long meetings with equally long prayers telling the Lord everything he already knows. However it may also be because we have not listened to the whole text.

It really is an amazing promise! A reminder that prayer is the powerhouse of the Church, or the earth-moving part of Jesus' reconstruction business. In many of the churches in which I have ministered it is through having a circle of prayer at the heart of Circuit life that we have seen lives changed; people called to Christian service; practical needs supplied; griefs comforted; bodies healed or

their owners helped to see God's purpose through pain and tragedy; books balanced! - one Circuit stayed solvent on prayer for at least nine years!

I would love to drive an earth-mover though I am not sure where I would start or if I could be trusted. I like to think the Lord may share my wish. Very practical in his ministry, he is in the mountain moving business (*Matthew 21.21*). That's why we do have to read the whole promise. *Where two or three (that's all it takes) come together in my name **I am there with them**. You get the digger out and I'll be in the cab with you!*

I often think about that in the light of one of my favourite passages of scripture - Paul's words when writing to Christian in Colossae (*1:15f*) It is humbling to read how it is through Jesus God created everything in both earthly and spiritual dimensions and through him has brought the whole universe back to peace with himself by the Cross - and there's so much more! And it's he, Jesus, who gets in the cab with us!! That's what makes the prayer group exciting and powerful - having him as at least the third person on board. *Why aren't we queuing at the doors?*

One more thought from Paul's words. They are in today's reading from his letter to the Christians in Rome. He says that as his people we have one overriding duty - one obligation - and that is to love - to keep the commandments of love for God and neighbour. It's love which makes the prayer which fuels the faith which drives the Christian community to build the Kingdom.

Prayer bubbles will still be the way forward for our post pandemic Church.

If you still have time, one more quick thought about today's Psalm. I once heard someone say, like the psalmist, *that the whole creation is praising God. All creatures are declaring their thanks to God in cries and songs*. For a while I heard the mistlethrush and blackbird in harmony, their song of gratitude ending with a chaffinch's final *thank you* flourish. Now with the approach of autumn the dawn chorus has changed. I woke a few mornings past to the course "*Thank You....Thank you*" of the crow, soon to be followed by a pigeon's "*Thank yooo, Thank yooo..... Thank yooo ...Thank yooo Thanks*". It all ended with a magpie's "*Ta,Ta,Ta*" and the piercing "*Thank You*" screech of a seagull putting everyone else off key. In the spirit of St Francis I felt it would be a day of good things!

A Prayer

Give me, Lord, a grateful heart and grace to fulfil my obligation to love.