

Reflections for 8th August 2021

10th Sunday after Trinity

Signs of the Kingdom

There is a cartoon I first saw a few years ago – with a picture of Moses having parted the waters of the Red Sea, so there are two great walls of water on either side, and a path through the seabed in between. The people of Israel are stood there looking not very impressed, and Moses is saying, ‘What do you mean, “It’s a bit muddy?”’ It makes a good point, because one of the things that the people of Israel did on their journey out of Egypt, and through the promised land, was to grumble.

We are following a series of readings from John chapter 6, all based around Jesus calling himself the ‘bread of life’, and there are a lot of links between that chapter and the story of the exodus from Egypt. And one of those links is grumbling. In the gospel the people grumbled about what Jesus was saying, and, as we hear in this week’s story, the people grumbled against Moses and Aaron, their leaders.

The people who heard the teaching of Jesus had the most amazing opportunity – they had God himself present with them, in human form, in the person of Jesus. So what did they do? They grumbled, saying something like, ‘It’s just that man from Nazareth. We know his parents. What is he doing saying things like that?’

The good news is that the kingdom of God is near, that God’s presence and power is close at hand. Luke’s gospel tells us that when Jesus came to Jerusalem, he wept over the city, because he said that they had failed to recognise God’s moment when it came (Luke 19. 41).

Today, we could pray that we may not be among the grumblers, who prefer to sit back and do nothing, and who may fail to see how God is at work, among us, close at hand. And we could pray that we may be ready to recognise the signs of God’s kingdom breaking into our world and our lives today – ready to respond when we recognise the ways that God is at work among us.

Revd John Waller

Lord God,
you have declared that your kingdom is among us.
Open our ears to hear it, our hearts to serve it,
and our hearts to hold it.
This we pray in Jesus’ name. Amen.

Bible readings: 1 Kings 19. 4-8; Ephesians 4. 25 – 5. 2; John 6. 35, 41-51

Story: ‘A Long Journey’ (based on parts of the book of Exodus)