

Holy Trinity Sunningdale
Sunday, March 19, 2023 – Mothering Sunday
Readings – Matthew 5:1-12

From the beginning of Lent, we have been exploring the five marks of mission developed by the Anglican Consultative Council in 1984 as the hallmarks by which the vitality and activity of the church can be measured. Today we are looking at Teach explained as to teach, baptise and nurture those new to the faith.

Today is also Mothering Sunday - a chance to say 'thank you' for the special role of mothers. As we celebrate and appreciate those people – male and female, who perform the mothering roles of nurturing, nourishing and caring, let us remember to bring before God, all people for whom Mothering Sunday may bring painful memories - the pain of childlessness, singleness, loneliness or the loss of a mother or a child. To feel great love is to open yourself to great pain.

Today, I want to say thank you by sharing my favourite poem on motherhood titled, **“When you thought I wasn’t looking...”**

When you thought I wasn't looking
You hung my first painting on the refrigerator
And I wanted to paint another.

When you thought I wasn't looking
You fed a stray cat
And I thought it was good to be kind to animals.

When you thought I wasn't looking
You baked a birthday cake just for me
And I knew that little things were special things.

When you thought I wasn't looking
You said a prayer
And I believed there was a God that I could always talk to.

When you thought I wasn't looking
You kissed me goodnight
And I felt loved.

When you thought I wasn't looking
I saw tears come from your eyes
And I learned that sometimes things hurt
But that it's all right to cry.

When you thought I wasn't looking
You smiled
And it made me want to look that pretty too.

When you thought I wasn't looking
You cared
And I wanted to be everything I could be.

When you thought I wasn't looking
I looked
And I want to say thanks
For all the things you did
When you thought I wasn't looking.

The Bible told us very little about the childhood days of Jesus and I wonder what Jesus learned from Mary and Joseph – his earthly parents, when they thought he wasn't looking. 39 times in the gospels Jesus is called the teacher, and 6 times, he referred to himself as teacher – a total of 45 times. Teaching is definitely an important aspect of his earthly ministry.

Today, we read the beatitudes - the beginning of a long passage of teaching by Jesus in Matthew's gospel, also known as the Sermon on the Mount. The Church of England's website states that, "The Beatitudes offer a vision of what it means to follow Jesus Christ. The Beatitudes sum up Jesus' teaching about what it means to live as a child of God's kingdom."

Just as parents would teach children the ways in which they are to live Jesus is teaching us how the Father wants us to live. Each beatitude is a direct contradiction of society's way of life. Position, authority, and money or wealth are not important in the kingdom, what matters is faithful obedience. Jesus says that God's kingdom is organized differently from the kingdoms of the world and kingdom people seek different blessings and benefits and have different attitudes.

Therefore, if we want to live for God, we must be willing to say and do what seems strange to the world. We must be willing to give when others take, to love when others hate, to help when others abuse. By giving up our own rights in order to serve others, we will one day receive everything God has in store for us in his kingdom.

One key role of the church is to be a means of new birth into the life of faith. As a church community and family, each one of us have the responsibility to share in the nurturing of others like a mother would do, allowing people to flourish and encouraging freedom and fulfilment.

Each beatitude tells how to be blessed. These words don't promise laughter, pleasure or earthly prosperity. Instead, we are promised hope and joy - the deepest forms of happiness, independent of outward circumstances. Jesus' words are good news because they offer freedom, hope, peace of heart and eternal life with God. And that is the good news we are to teach and share with others. Are we ready to share this good news?

Let us pray:

A Mother's Day Prayer from the Church of England

Thank you God that you love each one of us. Thank you for homes and help those who don't feel safe today. Thank you God for all the people who work to take care of us every day. Keep us close to your love each day. Amen.

Dolapo Ogunbawo