



Sunday 21st June 2020

2nd Sunday after Trinity

Father's Day

**The Beacon Parishes Mission Community of Ipplepen with Torbryan,
Denbury, Broadhempston and Woodland**

FIRST READING

Genesis 21.8-21

Hagar and Ishmael Sent Away

The child grew, and was weaned; and Abraham made a great feast on the day that Isaac was weaned. But Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, whom she had borne to Abraham, playing with her son Isaac. So she said to Abraham, 'Cast out this slave woman with her son; for the son of this slave woman shall not inherit along with my son Isaac.' The matter was very distressing to Abraham on account of his son. But God said to Abraham, 'Do not be distressed because of the boy and because of your slave woman; whatever Sarah says to you, do as she tells you, for it is through Isaac that offspring shall be named after you. As for the son of the slave woman, I will make a nation of him also, because he is your offspring.' So Abraham rose early in the morning, and took bread and a skin of water, and gave it to Hagar, putting it on her shoulder, along with the child, and sent her away. And she departed, and wandered about in the wilderness of Beer-sheba.

When the water in the skin was gone, she cast the child under one of the bushes. Then she went and sat down opposite him a good way off, about the distance of a bowshot; for she said, 'Do not let me look on the death of the child.' And as she sat opposite him, she lifted up her voice and wept. And God heard the voice of the boy; and the angel of God called to Hagar from heaven, and said to her, 'What troubles you, Hagar? Do not be afraid; for God has heard the voice of the boy where he is. Come, lift up the boy and hold him fast with your hand, for I will make a great nation of him.' Then God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water. She went, and filled the skin with water, and gave the boy a drink.

God was with the boy, and he grew up; he lived in the wilderness, and became an expert with the bow. He lived in the wilderness of Paran; and his mother got a wife for him from the land of Egypt.

PSALM

Psalms 86.1-10, 16-End

Supplication for Help against Enemies

A Prayer of David.

Incline your ear, O LORD, and answer me,
for I am poor and needy.

Preserve my life, for I am devoted to you;
save your servant who trusts in you.

You are my God; be gracious to me, O Lord,
for to you do I cry all day long.

Gladden the soul of your servant,
for to you, O Lord, I lift up my soul.

For you, O Lord, are good and forgiving,
abounding in steadfast love to all who call on you.

Give ear, O LORD, to my prayer;
listen to my cry of supplication.

In the day of my trouble I call on you,
for you will answer me.

There is none like you among the gods, O Lord,
nor are there any works like yours.
All the nations you have made shall come
and bow down before you, O Lord,
and shall glorify your name.
For you are great and do wondrous things;
you alone are God.
Turn to me and be gracious to me;
give your strength to your servant;
save the child of your serving-maid.
Show me a sign of your favour,
so that those who hate me may see it and be put to shame,
because you, LORD, have helped me and comforted me.

SECOND READING

Romans 6.1b-11

Dying and Rising with Christ

What then are we to say? Should we continue in sin in order that grace may abound? By no means! How can we who died to sin go on living in it? Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? Therefore we have been buried with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.

For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. We know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be destroyed, and we might no longer be enslaved to sin. For whoever has died is freed from sin. But if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. The death he died, he died to sin, once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God. So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

GOSPEL

Matthew 10.24-39

'A disciple is not above the teacher, nor a slave above the master; it is enough for the disciple to be like the teacher, and the slave like the master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebul, how much more will they malign those of his household!

Whom to Fear

'So have no fear of them; for nothing is covered up that will not be uncovered, and nothing secret that will not become known. What I say to you in the dark, tell in the light; and what you hear whispered, proclaim from the housetops. Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell. Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground unperceived by your Father. And even the hairs of your head are all counted. So do not be afraid; you are of more value than many sparrows.

'Everyone therefore who acknowledges me before others, I also will acknowledge before my Father in heaven; but whoever denies me before others, I also will deny before my Father in heaven.

Not Peace, but a Sword

'Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth; I have not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; and one's foes will be members of one's own household.

Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; and whoever does not take up the cross and follow me is not worthy of me. Those who find their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it.

Reflection for the Second Sunday after Trinity by The Revd. Tony Meek

In today's Gospel, Jesus says "I come not to bring peace, but a sword". (*Matt 10.34*). What is Jesus really saying? Does he mean it? Is this the same person who talks frequently of the peace that he brings into our lives and hearts when we are in relationship with him? Later, when Jesus is being arrested in the garden of Gethsemane, he tells his disciples to put away their swords. "Those who live by the sword will die by the sword," he says. (*Matt 26.52*). This is the Jesus who refused to be the revolutionary leader that many wanted him to be. So he must mean something other than a vision of an armed Christ who breaks up families. How do we understand, how do we accept these words?

To me it is amazing how one passage such as today's Gospel can contain words of such tenderness, like those about how much God values us, and then contain words of such challenge and heartache, like these that would divide us from those we love most.

Jesus was speaking in a time when discipleship carried far greater risks than it does today, at least here in Devon. Then, as now, to be a disciple of Jesus meant a completely new way of life. But then it also meant almost certain persecution. No wonder families were divided over such decisions of discipleship. Perhaps discipleship today doesn't carry the same tangible requirements. Perhaps it is less overtly risky. But the sword that Jesus brings does still call us to challenge ourselves.

The sword that Jesus brings challenges us constantly to reassess our priorities. When (some thirty years ago) I worked as a banker in the City, I encouraged my team to take a few minutes every hour to think about the various items of work on their desks and where appropriate move some up or down the pile as priorities might have changed in response to events. That was in a live operational setting, where my team and I were dealing with frauds, raids, IRA bombs, money laundering and compliance issues. But the principle still applies no less, if less dramatically, in our lives and relationships today. And most certainly in the strange, unsafe and uncertain times in which we now find ourselves.

I believe that loving Jesus above everything and everyone else makes my love for them so much better, so much stronger. Loving Jesus most enables me to love others more than I could without Jesus.

Does any of this make Jesus' words easier to hear? If we are looking for a way to be more comfortable with Jesus' words today, there are no easy solutions. But we can remember that the same Jesus who makes us squirm in our seats also speaks to us with such compassion about God's great love for us. Always challenging, and always comforting. Because He loves us, Jesus wants us not to settle for what is less than the best to which God has called us. And because we are precious and counted as loved, Jesus wants us to experience the life of discipleship that promises rewards nothing else offers. For "those who find their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for Christ's sake will find it." (*Matt 10.39*)