

11th Sunday of Trinity



God of constant mercy,
 who sent your Son to save us:
 remind us of your goodness,
 increase your grace within us,
 that our thankfulness may grow,
 through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

1 Kings 2:10-12, 3:3 - 14 OT page 313
 Ephesians 5:15 - 20 NT page 192
 John 6:51 - 58 NT page 95
 (NIV used in sermon preparation).

Immanuel
 St Andrew Church

Before David died his son Adonijah pronounced himself king! King David has been told by God that Solomon, who's name means peace, should rule after him so he calls for Nathan the prophet, Zadok the priest, Bathsheba (Solomon's mother) and Benaiah son of Jehoiada (one of David's mighty commanders) and takes an oath to fulfil his promise that Solomon will be anointed by Zadok and succeed him as King.

By the time king David died he had got his relationship with God right, been blessed with more children and Solomon succeeds him as king. The account of all that happened is in 1 Kings 1:28-40ff. Solomon is young and shows his love for the Lord by honouring his father's instructions but also offers sacrifices and burns incense in high places in praise of God.

At one of the times of sacrifice the Lord appears to Solomon and invites him to ask for whatever he wants. Solomon does not ask for anything selfish ~ instead he asks for a discerning heart so that he might rule well and govern the people. God is pleased with Solomon, grants this request and promises wealth and honour as well! The scene is set for a time of peace a prosperity!

As you pick through these accounts in Samuel and Kings there is a common thread or theme. **Get your relationship with God right!** To do that you and I have to seek the Lord in the first place.

When we seek Him we need to respond obediently to what we discover.

Paul's letter to the Ephesians talks of getting the relationship right when he writes

“Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil.”
Ephesians 5:15,16

By saying days are evil Paul is simply stating that the world we live in is full of situations that could entice us to behave negatively and dishonour God ~ to mar His image in us. We are given guidance regarding what is right and what is wrong. Simply don't indulge in excessive or addictive behaviour that will lead to damaging yourself and others instead welcome the Holy Spirit and join with others to praise God, enjoying each others company and seeing God's presence.

All that Paul bids is accessible to us because of what Jesus offers as the bread of life ~ the opportunity to totally absorb and accept that He is God's Son and that through Him we are given eternal life ~ and an example in Jesus for how to live our lives,

Jesus makes the distinction between the ancestors who were Offered, and ate, manna ~ literally food to take in their mouths and the bread He offers which is not something to physically eat but to nourish mind and soul, making us healthy and whole.

If you notice we are told that the Jews (authorities and priests) were taking Jesus' words literally and thus were behaving like the ancestors and missing what was being offered to them. The people listening would have been well aware of what was going on just as you and I today are painfully aware that among those around us some are missing out ~ not interested in seeking and journeying with us. That can be really hard, especially if it is a close family member that is not 'getting it' or appears to reject faith.

What can we do? Three suggestions:-

1. We can pray to the Lord that His Spirit will work in their hearts ~ because we are told that it is a work of the Spirit to bring

individuals to faith.

2. We can be prepared to share what we believe and why when we are given the opportunity ~ because the Spirit is already in each of us as believers and the Spirit will prompt us with what to say and do.

3. We can respond to opportunities to provide situations where the Spirit can work by preparing the way in materialistic ways. But that is very different from trying to create opportunities for people to respond to.

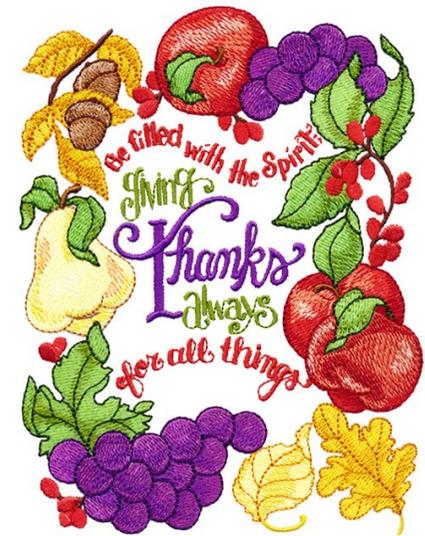
The trouble is that you and I walk a very fine line between trying to work with God and trying to work for God and what makes it hard is that working with God can be frustratingly slow but ultimately rewarding whereas working for God has an instant 'feel good factor' it feeds our self interest but ultimately leaves us despondent or meeting our own needs! We convince ourselves we are doing something good and it is not our fault that others are not joining in!

For a moment reflect on today's Collect ~

Recognise God's mercy in your life ~
ask to be reminded of His goodness ~
ask for His grace to be increased within you and

start to practice being thankful!

As you recognise and voice your thankfulness you will discover that it really does grow! Amen.



EPHESIANS 5:18,20