

Sermon 5 July 2020 Proper 9 (Trinity 4) Year A

Zechariah 9.9-12; Psalm 145.8-14; Romans 7.15-25a; **Matthew 11.16-19,25-30**

‘May the words of my mouth and the meditation of all our hearts be acceptable in your eyes, O Lord my Rock and my Redeemer, Amen’

Sometimes we are our own worst taskmasters- call it perfectionism, or just not matching up to each other’s expectations. It has always been so. Jesus commented that the people of his generation were not happy with John the Baptist’s call to repentance, nor his own meeting and greeting of those that were regarded as wanton sinners and the outcast tax-collectors that were seen as collaborators with the ruling Roman occupiers. We are all guilty at times of being picky like children, not fitting in to each other’s groups. Even the great evangelist St Paul speaks of falling short of his own expectations in his letter to the Romans. He wanted to do the very best as prescribed by the law of God and yet at his own judgement falls short. And of his own disciples at Gethsemane Jesus said: ‘The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak’.

We are none of us perfect, but that is why it is so wonderful that we have a gracious God- who still loves us despite all our shortcomings. Paul exclaims after bemoaning his own shortcomings: ‘Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!’

Jesus recognises his Father’s Gracious will and says in a wonderful promise to us all: *‘Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. ²⁹ Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰ For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.’*

Whilst knowing that Jesus’ sacrifice was great we also have the promise that when the troubles of the world become heavy, and the burdens and worries we carry weigh us down, we can give them to Him and he promises to lift that burden from us. We do not face the world and its troubles alone- we always have Jesus at our side lifting the burden from our shoulders, just as pairs of Oxen share the load when ploughing- and the load is not halved but more like quartered! At this time after several months of lockdown when tempers are fraying and frustrations beginning to show, and whilst balancing the safety of everyone as we seek to gradually lift the restrictions on our liberties, we need

to be compassionate to one another, showing understanding and following Jesus' lead.

Jesus knew the compassion of the Father heart of God – spoken about in our Psalm (145) today: 'The LORD is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. ⁹The LORD is good to all, and his compassion is over all that he has made.' And 'The LORD upholds all who are falling, and raises up all who are bowed down'. And the hope of his everlasting Kingdom of Peace to all Nations that is spoken of in our Old Testament reading from Zechariah (9:9-12) is not possible without us being reconciled to God by Grace, because despite all our shortcomings, He loves us and promises to care for us.

*O God our Father, Thank you that you love us and are always there for us.
Forgive us our shortcomings and help us, guiding us by your Holy Spirit to share
your love with each other in Jesus Name, Amen*

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