
Sunday 5th July 2020 – The Fourth Sunday after Trinity

Readings: Romans 7:15-25a & Matthew 11:16-19, 25-30

Romans 7:15-25a

I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do. And if I do what I do not want to do, I agree that the law is good. As it is, it is no longer I myself who do it, but it is sin living in me. For I know that good itself does not dwell in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. For I do not do the good I want to do, but the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing. Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it.

So I find this law at work: Although I want to do good, evil is right there with me. For in my inner being I delight in God's law; but I see another law at work in me, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within me. What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body that is subject to death? Thanks be to God, who delivers me through Jesus Christ our Lord!

Matthew 11:16-19, 25-30

“To what can I compare this generation? They are like children sitting in the marketplaces and calling out to others:

“‘We played the pipe for you,
and you did not dance;
we sang a dirge,
and you did not mourn.’

For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, ‘He has a demon.’ The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, ‘Here is a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners.’ But wisdom is proved right by her deeds.”

At that time Jesus said, “I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children. Yes, Father, for this is what you were pleased to do.

“All things have been committed to me by my Father. No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. 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. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”

Reflection

It's over three months since, for all of us, life changed dramatically. Some of us will have felt we haven't had time and space to breathe as life has become much busier. Some of us will have suddenly been faced with empty diaries and more free time than we would like. But a recurring message among everyone I've spoken to is “I'm just so tired”.

That tiredness may be because life is overfull and we're juggling too much - and that juggling means sleep and relaxation are the balls we always drop. But it may be a weariness that comes through being mentally exhausted. The news is a constant round of pain - from Covid-19 to racism to recession. Many of us now live our lives completely through staring at a screen and feel drained by it. We might be constantly thinking about the things that worry us - whether that's friends and family we can't see, concerns about health, fear of redundancy, relationship strain.

So many of us feel that our brain has been whirring at 100mph for more than three months now.

It's exhausting. We're burdened. We're heavy-laden. We're weary. Just so weary.

But we don't need to be. We have someone who wants to share our load. And he's able to do it because he carried the weight of the world on his shoulders when he went to the cross at Calvary. He wasn't broken by the load of all of the sin that had ever - and would ever - exist so he won't be broken by our load.

Jesus could carry it for us but he wants to carry it with us. He wants us to trust him enough to continue to walk along this path but to do it knowing that he is with us, supporting us and helping us.

A “yoke” allowed oxen to carry a heavy load. Two oxen would be “yoked” together so that they shared the load. And the stronger, more experienced one took the brunt of the weight. Jesus invites us to share our load with him. He longs to take the heavier part of our load. But he can only carry the load with us if we'll give it to him.

And the easiest way to allow him to carry the load with us is simply to tell him about it. To tell him the things that burden us and make us weary. To cry out to him when fear overwhelms us, when loneliness strikes, when doubts grip us. As we tell him, our burden will start to shift so that we're carrying it with him rather than alone. And that act of sharing our load means we can rest. We can find energy for our souls. We can find peace in our minds.

But I also believe that Jesus wants us to pick up some burdens. The passage doesn't say that there are no burdens. It says there are light burdens. All around us things happen that burden God - things that make his heart heavy as he watches his children suffer.

60 years ago Bob Pierce, the founder of World Vision, prayed these words: "Let my heart be broken by the things that break the heart of God."

But the difference with God's burdens is that he doesn't want us to be overwhelmed. He wants us to act. He wants our hearts to be stirred so that we act to bring change where there is injustice or to bring comfort where there's grief.

So today, will you share with God the things that burden you and make you weary? Will you let him carry the load with you? And will you ask him what burdens him and how he wants you to share that load with him? Will you yoke yourself to him today?

Kerry Thomas