

Trinity 6 year A

1 Kings 3:5-12; Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52

In our Old Testament reading Solomon famously **asks God for wisdom** – an understanding heart is another translation. We are told that God is pleased with his unselfish request, granting him riches and a good life as an added extra. *Almost a BOGOF scenario.*

We may remember the story of **the two women who each claimed a baby as their own**. As judge, Solomon's wonderful decision was to suggest cutting said baby in half so they can each have some. *One woman says OK, go ahead, the other says give the baby to her, I renounce my claim.* Guess who was the real mother? Of course, the one who was willing to sacrifice her motherhood for the life of the child.

It is on this story, on **Solomon's ability to read human nature**, that the legend of his wisdom is largely based – there are other instances of course but you'll have to read the rest of Kings and Ecclesiastes to find out.

We have recently heard a great deal of heart-rending detail of the tragedy of baby **Charlie Gard**; I wonder what Solomon would have made of that? Human nature and love of a child exposed public gaze with no happy outcome.

**Reporting has such a huge influence on our lives.** Without someone publishing these two stories we would know nothing about them, just as we know nothing about the many tragedies and triumphs that happen every day, but are not considered news-worthy.

Solomon was given wisdom as a gift, a talent, from God but he didn't always heed his own sense of justice, **didn't always listen to his**

**own heart or to God.** *He equally famously made peace with many adversarial countries by taking the daughters of their rulers as wives thus cementing peace treaties BUT at the same time, opening himself up to many different ideas and points of view.* Just watching the wheeling and dealing in the USA demonstrates how easily a ruler can be **persuaded towards or away from a course of action** by those around them.

There is a bracelet you can get from Christian conferences and bookshops which carries the **letters WWJD**, which stands for What Would Jesus Do? Mostly worn by young people the bracelet serves to remind them to think carefully and pray before acting. To ask how would Jesus behave in this situation?

*Without God's help we are like a ship without a rudder, tossed about and at the mercy of every gust of wind. Unless we not only ask the question but listen to the answer and act upon it, we are equally at the mercy of every whim, every new idea, every fad and fashion, every news hounds report, however inaccurate.*

How important to you, as an individual, is the survival of this church as a body of people? How much effort are you prepared to put in, how much sacrifice to **ensure this community of Christians survives** for future generations – your children and grandchildren?

Our New Testament reading from the Gospel according to Matthew is in the form of several parables. Jesus often used parables or fables to **demonstrate truths that were unpalatable** to his listeners – he didn't pull his punches either.

The planter of the mustard seed had to be patient before it grew into a tree sized plant. *The birds also had to wait before they could build their nests in its branches.* Without his careful planting and God's provision of water and light there would be no tree!!

The man who desperately wanted that fantastic pearl had to work for it, he had to gather all his other possessions, sell them and then buy the super pearl.

The man who found treasure in a field had to work hard to hide it; then negotiate a purchase of the whole field in order to claim the treasure for himself.

There are several sayings which suggest we need to do nothing except believe God loves us and everything will be OK eg let go and let God,. Does this mean we have no responsibility towards each other? That no matter what we will be looked after? Everything, in the end, will be all right?

*I don't think so because we also have "God helps those who help themselves" which is incidentally, the most famous biblical quote not found any where in the Bible!!*

**Those who trust in themselves are fools, but those who walk with God are kept safe. (Proverbs 28:26)**

Why would any of us work to spread the word of God? Why would any of us feel called to support anything that could improve the outreach of this community? Whose job is it?

It's human nature to blame circumstances or other people for many things. Today, instead of complaining about lack of support or no funds or anything you don't think is working as it should, ask yourself **"What action can I take to make it better?"** That will keep you, and me, from the trap explained in the **Parable of Responsibility**, which is a condensed form of Charles Osgood's 'Poem About Responsibility

Everybody, Somebody, Anybody and Nobody are the names of members of a group.

There was an important job to do and Everybody was asked to do it. Everybody was sure Somebody would do it.

Anybody would have done it, but Nobody did it.

Somebody got angry because it was Everybody's job.

Everybody thought Anybody would do it, but Nobody realised that Anybody wouldn't do it.

It ended up that Everybody blamed Somebody, when Nobody did what Anybody could have done.

Let us not fall into that trap, we are all responsible for getting the job done, with the help of God, without whom we would not exist.

So please, sign up at the back of the church to help at the Flower Festival and the Country Day. A large amount of our income comes from these two events. There are around 400 on our parish electoral roll and our expenses last year came to around £85,000. If these fund raisers fail each one of us will need to increase our giving by **£200 a year just to maintain the Status Quo**, and I think the Share is going up by £13,000 next year just for starters.

BUT as St Theresa says, Christ has no body now but ours, WE ARE his hands, his feet on earth;

Doing his work is up to us, to you and to me **not to somebody else.**