



Putting what we hear into action

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Year A, Ordinary 30

Psalm 1

Leviticus 19:1-2, 15-18

Matthew 22:34-46

29 October 2023

In the name of God, Creator, Redeemer and giver of life. Last Sunday morning at the Climate Justice meeting, I shared how I had spent time during the week thinking seriously about 'Education, responsibility, advocacy and activism'. I accept that all four of these are necessary but my thinking got stuck on education. Have I ever received education to enable me to live out my faith in my community? Not that I can remember! I come to church, listen, and accept that it was a good sermon in explaining what the readings for the morning were. I may tell the priest or the person who preached "that it was a good sermon". We have morning tea or a coffee. Do we talk about the sermon? Probably today, football will be the discussion! We go out those doors and go home or wherever we are going!

Was I educated this morning on how to put what I heard into action? Let's listen to the readings;

Happy are those whose delight is in the law of God. They are like trees planted by streams of water. They won't get thirsty.

Then we have; God of love. Jesus teaches us the heart of the law.

Empower us to love with our whole being, and to love our neighbour as ourselves. Amen

What if I don't like my neighbour and I don't like myself.

Often those two go together!!

Do you remember the Leviticus reading?

"The Lord spoke to Moses saying: speak to all the congregations of the people of Israel and say to them: You shall be holy, for the Lord your God is Holy." How do I become holy?

Please to forgive me if I am treading on toes

Then we have the Gospel; great, someone is asking a question? He asks; Teacher, which commandment in the law is greatest? He said to them, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul and with your entire mind. This is the greatest and first commandment and you must love your neighbour as yourself." When I get home or wherever I am going; I get asked; How was church? Answer; "It was fine the music was great." How do I explain..... I have the best intentions in the world while I am sitting in church listening! You see; I intend to live those laws...but there are some people who get under my skin and my best intentions go out the door. My intention of being a disciple has failed again.

Now I am going to try and help you and me to understand.

I share some thoughts from Bishop Richard Anderson, from a sermon he preached a couple of weeks ago in Wellington. He says..... Faith is not primarily an intellectual belief in creeds, doctrines, liturgies, music, icons or a cross. These things are merely signposts whose usefulness is measured by the extent to which they lead us to an experience of God and to discipleship. If they are meaningful for you or me, they will lead us to discipleship if we allow them.

If we allow them.

Dag Hammarskjold, second Secretary-General of the United Nations says; I don't know who or what put the question. I don't know when it was put. I don't even remember answering. But at some time I did answer 'Yes' to Someone, or Something, and from that hour I was certain that existence is meaningful and that therefore my life in self-surrender, had a goal.

Our existence is meaningful and we have a goal. A goal to be disciples when we leave here this morning.

I want to read a couple of paragraphs from an email I get every Saturday.

“My maternal grandparents wanted to emigrate to Israel. Growing up as extremely poor Jews in Poland, in 1920 they were barely out of their teens when they caught the dream of a safe homeland for Jews, governed not by hereditary leaders, but by the people. With no ships willing to transport Jews to what the British mandate was then calling “Palestine,” they ended up emigrating to the United States instead.

But for this accident of fate, it could have been me, caught in the middle of the conflict between Israel and Hamas.....

But for an accident of geography, I could have been a peace-maker, a peace-wisher in this troubled land. I could have shared a moment of grief, of consolation, with someone on the other side. I could have been a mother catching the eyes of another across a public space, and knowing that the bonds of motherhood transcended all the worlds of difference. I could have worked in one of the hospitals serving the injured from all sides. I could have been a member of one of the many groups working to build friendships and

understanding Palestinians and Israelis, Jews, Muslims and Christians.

I could have been a rabbi, an imam, a priest, storming the heavens with prayers for peace.

It could have been me.

It could have been any of us, in any country.

It could be all of us.

Peace. Shalom. Salaam.

Lord, have mercy.[1]

[1] <https://worldinprayer.org/2023/world-news-this-week-in-prayer-thurs-oct-26-2023/>