

Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> June Trinity 2

## Read Matthew 10.24-39

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### Reflection

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We continue this week to hear Jesus instructing his disciples as he sends them out to proclaim that the Kingdom of heaven is near. Their mission will not be easy but God is on their side, there is nothing to fear. In today's reading there are both words of reassurance and warning. Who said being a follower of Jesus would be easy!

Jesus has taught his disciples all they need to know, now they are to be just like him – a student is not above the teacher. When the moment is right they are to reveal to people the truth that Jesus has disclosed to them. They are not to be intimidated by those who seek to silence them, no one can destroy them for God holds the very core of their being in his hands. God is intimately intertwined with all his creation, even a sparrow, the lowliest of all creatures, he care for. How much more God loves humankind whom he has made in his image – he even knows how many hairs are on your head.

But, Jesus warns, there are some who are not ready to hear that the kingdom of heaven has come near. The peace which Jesus brings will meet scepticism and opposition, and even cause family division just as the prophet Micah predicted. Their priority is to identify themselves as followers of Jesus – they belong to him, not their family. In acknowledging their commitment to Jesus he will acknowledge them to their Father in heaven. Trusting in Jesus will lead to life in all its fulness.

We are children of God before we are anyone else's son or daughter, husband or wife. Through baptism our identity is found in Christ - our lives must demonstrate that we are Christlike. We are apostles because we are 'sent out' to live out our Christian faith in the place God has set us. May all that we do be done in love.

How are we to speak the truth of God's sovereignty in the world today? Our priority is our relationship with God and looking to Jesus, His living Word alive and active and paying attention to where the Holy Spirit leads us. Each one of us has a part to play in being Love to our neighbour. Drawing closer to God in prayer we must ask - to whom am I to be Christlike to today? There will be times when we are asked to love in practical ways, there will times when the most helpful thing is to listen attentively to others and there will be times when it is appropriate to speak out.

There must always be time for God. A time to examine ourselves before the One who knows us as we truly are. Acknowledging and repenting of our wrongdoings, knowing that we are forgiven will pave the way for the right action – and the right action is the one God is directing you personally to take. Remember not everyone is ready to recognise that love is of God. When we meet opposing views to our own we must guard against our human instinct to be defensive. So often hurtful things are said in a heated moment. Think before you speak or ask yourself, 'what would Jesus say'. If the time is right the Holy Spirit will equip us with all we need to say, if not stay silent and wait for the right time. Be active in our waiting, for Love is always the light in the dark. Live out your faith in loving actions which always speak louder than words.

Speaking the truth into some situations is difficult, just as the disciples found, but don't turn your back. Psalm 34 urges us to, 'Turn from evil and do good. Seek peace and pursue it'. This seems to be very apt in light of recent events. How can we really know what it is like to be a person of colour unless we listen and learn from people who suffer from the injustice of racial hatred. How can we take action unless we root out any prejudice in ourselves or think about the privileges that white people have. When we pursue peace by seeking the well-being of others, we will be participating in bringing in the Kingdom. Then we can offer all that we are to God and say, 'Here I am, send me'. Let God be your guide as you are sent out, on your own unique path, walk closely with Him and when the going gets tough He will carry you. May all of us live and work to His praise and glory.