



Twentieth Sunday after Pentecost

Sermon by Revd Allie Joseph



Sunday 18 October 2020

READINGS

Exodus 33: 12-23; Psalm 99; 1 Thessalonians 1: 1-10; Matthew 22: 15-22

Being God's People

Moses, God's friend, is having regular meetings with God, the people became impatient with the whole process and made themselves idols and worshipped these, then God has this talk with Moses. Amidst the struggle, amidst the unfaithfulness and broken promises, two friends can still have an open and honest conversation, one that leads to Moses experiencing the Glory of God.

God wants to abandon the people and make Moses into a nation, but Moses knew who he was and reminded God about who God was.

Sometimes we too go through difficulties and sometimes we feel as if we will not be able to make it, and it's at these moments of despair we hear the words of Moses: **Remember that this nation is your people.**

In the most difficult of times we too need to be reminded of this, we are God's people. We need to be reminded that God knows us and that God is with us throughout the challenges we face.

When we realize that we need God not only to make sense of our lives and our circumstances but also to show us the way through the challenges we face, then we truly understand what it means when God says: **My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest.**

Presently we live in a time that none of us could ever have imagined. Our very foundations have been shaken and we are being asked questions that we chose to ignore for the longest time.

The challenges we are faced with threatens the way we have come to understand and lived our lives. Looking back over the last year we see how the world has changed. All around us we see the effects of the pandemic. Our economy, our social contract, our education, and other systems are struggling to cope with the new normal.

Like the Israelites we are also embarking on a journey, that will have as its destination a new reality for each of us. The pandemic has shown us new angles at which we can look at ourselves and others. The pandemic is making us see our relationships in new ways.

Our priorities are changing, and so are we. It is important for us as Christians to reflect on what it means to be the people of God,

- ◆ people whom God knows personally
- ◆ people who need God
- ◆ people to whom God reveals God self.

Much of our religion is about revelation, God has revealed Godself to us and we are called upon to join each other on this journey of revelation. Finding out who we are in relation to God and each other.

We are almost at the end of a very difficult year. It has been tough on all of us. We remain prayerful in our journey and we are optimistic that our future will certainly be brighter. We are more equipped now that we have learned that our lives can change in the blink of an eye.

Looking ahead it is easy to say that we have one the highest rates of recoveries and that we are better off than in other countries. The challenge we face now is not to become complacent but to cherish the precious nature of this blessing called life and the freedoms it bring.

From all of this we learn that:

1. We belong to the people of God

Know that despite all you are, despite all that is happening, you are a child of God, you belong to God's people. God is with you and you will share in God's peace.

2. We need to acknowledge our need for God.

Something very important I need to highlight from the exodus reading is our basic need for God, Moses knows this when he says: **If your Presence does not go with us, do not send us up from here.**

From this very intimate conversation between God and Moses we learn that despite all our human genius and ability, we need God and that this is what makes us Gods people.

3. We must have faith in God

In the end we only see part of God, as Moses was prevented from seeing all of God we too some times only see part of what God while God invites us into a relationship that involves faith, faith that leads us from the one experience of God to the next. As we so much desire to see God face to face, to most of us the face of God still remains hidden but we know that it is God who is with us in those moments when we could not have survived on our own strength and ability.

4. We must live our conviction

The Christian is called to show to the world the presence of God, in and through our Cristian witness we are those whom God knows, we are those whom God calls into a personal relationship.

Do not allow the knowledge of your own shortcomings to prevent you from showing up and being there for one another. The Christian belongs to God's people and God is with us throughout, even in the times when we are not.