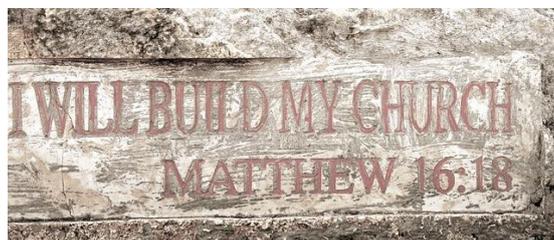


The 11th Sunday after Trinity

Sunday 23rd August 2020



The Collect for 11th Sunday after Trinity

O God, you declare your almighty power most chiefly in showing mercy and pity: mercifully grant to us such a measure of your grace, that we, running the way of your commandments, may receive your gracious promises, and be made partakers of your heavenly treasure; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen

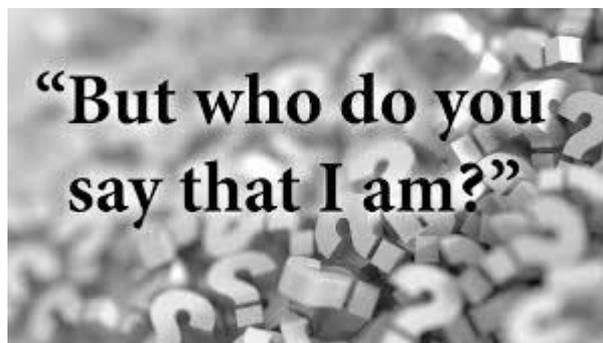
Romans 12:1-8

I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect. For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of yourself more highly than you ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. For as in one body we have many members, and not all the members have the same function, so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another. We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us: prophecy, in proportion to faith; ministry, in ministering; the teacher, in teaching; the exhorter, in exhortation; the giver, in generosity; the leader, in diligence; the compassionate, in cheerfulness.



The Gospel Reading: Matthew 16: 13-20

Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, 'Who do people say that the Son of Man is?' And they said, 'Some say John the Baptist, but others Elijah, and still others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.' He said to them, 'But who do you say that I am?' Simon Peter answered, 'You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.' And Jesus answered him, 'Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father in heaven. And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.' Then he sternly ordered the disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Messiah.



Reflection from The Rector

It was in 1994 that I spent very nearly 2 weeks in the Holy Land. We visited so many of the places that up to then I had only read about in the bible. Three stand out above the rest and the first was on the night that we arrived in Jerusalem. It was night fall and I felt that a very special adventure was just about to start as I recalled Jesus own knowledge of the city and of His triumphal procession into Jerusalem on the day we know as Palm Sunday and then the events of Holy Week, Good Friday and Easter. In the days that followed we traced the footsteps of Our Lord and something of his ministry. Cana of Galilee was a special place for me and I was privileged to celebrate Communion in the chapel there. Another high point was the place where the encounter that is our gospel reading happened and is commemorated in a church near the spot. There is the most moving statue outside the church. Jesus is looking directly at Peter as he gives him the commission to lead the church.

Caesarea Philippi was outside Galilee -it was not in the territory of Herod but in that of Philip. It was a town with an amazing history. It had once been a great centre of pagan worship. It was here that the Greek God "Pan" was said to have been born-on a hillside rose a great temple to Caesar the Roman Emperor-the ruler of most of the known world in those days who was said to be a god. It is against this backdrop that Jesus did a bit of market research saying "Who do people say that I am?" They reported in saying that some thought Jesus was John the Baptist and others that he was Elijah or Jeremiah or another of the prophets. Jesus turned to the disciples and made it all very personal saying " but

you ,who do you say that I am”. Simon Peters answer was very clear” You are the Christ, the Son of the living God”. In his reply Jesus tells Simon that he is blessed, in that God has given him the ability to know who Jesus is and that he is the rock on which he will build the new Israel. He will give to Peter power to admit people into the Kingdom which is coming. Never have words of Jesus been so debated across the centuries. Peter made a statement of faith and then Jesus gave him a job to do. If we did some market research of our own and asked the same question that Jesus asked of the first disciples I wonder what the answers would be and I also wonder what our reply would be if those we questioned turned the tables on us and asked us to say who we feel Jesus is! Would our reply be summed up in the words of verses 3 and 4 in one of my favourite hymns

3 Dear Name! the Rock on which I build,
My Shield and Hiding Place,
My never-failing Treas'ry filled
With boundless stores of grace!

4 Jesus! my Shepherd, Brother, Friend,
My Prophet, Priest, and King;
My Lord, my Life, my Way, my End,
Accept the praise I bring.

Jesus turns to you and to me and says “ Never mind what others say “ Who do you say that I am”. Jesus loves us so deeply and is the rock on which we build our whole lives. As you know, in Him we can place all our trust and he will never let us down even if we stumble and fall at times as Peter was to discover in his life of adventure for his Lord and Master. What a wonderful Lord and Saviour we have.

The opening words of the final verse of Newtons hymn sums up the mission that was entrusted to Peter and the first disciples that is ours today

Till then I would thy love proclaim

With every fleeting breath.

In all our living may we glorify His name and bring others to Him whom to know is to have life and have it in all its fullness. Amen.

***With greetings to you all from
The Rector and Revd Helen***

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