

Greenways Benefice Weekly Devotional (No 19)

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Living in God's kingdom

Romans 8:26-39 & Matthew 13: 31-33 & 44-52

I'm not sure if you have every tried making your own bread? If you have you will know that the successful fermenting process that takes place when the yeast is added to the flour and water, is the key to making great bread. Jesus used this picture to express how the kingdom of God can influence our lives.

"The kingdom of heaven is like this. A woman takes some yeast and mixes it with forty litres of flour until the whole batch of dough rises." Matt 13:33.

This is the shortest of Jesus' parables and is also found In Luke's gospel. It reveals a simple truth about the kingdom of God that grows from small beginnings but has a reaching effect like the ripples that appear in a pond when you throw a stone in the water.

The yeast was comparatively small in quantity in comparison to the forty litres of flour the woman used to make her batch of dough. Perhaps we can imagine her kneading the dough and then leaving it to rise. The relatively small quantity of yeast is now having a visible effect doubling the size of the dough.

Zech 4:10 says, 'Who despises the day of small things?'

Countless times God in His word has chosen to use weak instruments to bring about mighty things. We too may think of ourselves as insignificant but God reminds us that seeking the Kingdom of God as number one priority has the power to transform our lives.

The transforming effect of this yeast takes place only as it is added within the flour and water mixture. It is present, invisible and doing its work from within. On one occasion Jesus declared the Kingdom of God is within you!

Here is what Charles Spurgeon had to say on this subject.

'It operates mysteriously and secretly, yet powerfully, till it permeates the whole of man's nature. And the gospel will keep on winning its way till the whole world shall be leavened by it.'

Charles Spurgeon

Fermenting yeast cultures can also be passed on to others. I recently had a go at making sourdough bread and after a couple of attempts was surprised at the results. This all happened because a friend of mine passed on some of her sourdough starter.

The leavening power of the kingdom of heaven can affect those we pass it onto. When the heart of individuals are touched by God it will transform and permeate community and culture.

Of course the end result of the woman's hard work in the parable was fresh tasty crusty bread with that unmistakable aroma that fills the whole house.

As we take time to read the passages of scripture for today we are encouraged to see that living in God's kingdom has a tremendous potential to influence every part of our lives for good.

Perhaps one of the most famous and well used verses in the NT that gets quoted often is Rom 8:28. It tells us that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him and are called according to His purpose.

In its true context it teaches us that in all things God works for the good, to enable us to be conformed to the likeness of His Son Jesus. Paul reveals this truth in the following verse v29.

I don't know about you but I like the idea that God is working in my life when I don't even realize it, and then I suddenly see what His hand has done!

God loves you and has a plan for your life! Often we think of that as something we need to discover. But primarily the plan is for us to become more Christ like through the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit.

God is so committed to this purpose that He has given everything to bring it about.

'He who did not spare his own Son, but gave Him up for us all – how will He not also, along with Him graciously give us all things.' Rom 8:32

Why not spend time today being conscious that God is working in us through His indwelling Spirit who enables us to become more Christ like and share his love with others.

Blessings

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