

A Reflection from Leisa on the Readings for the Third Sunday after Trinity

Matthew 10.40-42

Romans 6:11 - 23

With the world, in turmoil. With the personal struggles of our own lives. When there is so much distressing news taking our time and attention. When we cry out in prayer at the injustice, pain and outpouring of despair, vocalised and actioned throughout the nations - we might be tempted to think that our small work in the Kingdom of God goes unnoticed. But today's Gospel text dispels this false notion -- nothing done in Jesus' name, for the sake of the kingdom, is beyond God's gaze and delight. We are minding the gap and closing the distance between heaven and earth, in every new day.

We often imagine discipleship as requiring huge sacrifice or entailing great feats, and sometimes that is exactly what discipleship comes down to. Many of our bible characters, were prepared to make great sacrifices and follow a path not of their choosing, not to their advantage, but in a simple 'yes' to the pattern of God's command and call on their lives. Many of us who follow Jesus today are prepared to make great and seemly small sacrifices, in our simple 'yes' to the pattern of Jesus's command to follow him, in our everyday lives. Like all the small acts of devotion, tenderness, and forgiveness that go largely unnoticed, but tend the relationships that are most important to us, so also the life of faith is composed of a thousand small gestures of hope. Anything done in faith and love has cosmic significance, bringing heaven closer to earth for those involved and indeed, for the world God loves so much.

I love Loren Eiseley's story of "the Star Thrower" -- the story of the man tossing starfish after starfish into the sea. When asked why, he replies that if they don't get back in the water soon, they'll dry out and die. Looking at a beach strewn with thousands of starfish, his companion responds that he can't possibly hope to make any difference. To which he says -- "To the ones I throw back, it makes all the difference in the world."

Yes, we may be asked to do greater things than we imagined. We may be called to stand alongside one who is being 'sacrificed' on the altar of discrimination or prejudice. We may be called to stand against those who, while claiming to speak in God's name, proclaim things that contradict the grace and love of Christ. We may be called to grieve with those who feel abandoned by God and join in their lament. We may be called to celebrate with those who feel close to God and who enjoy a sense of deep blessing and joy. We may be called to change how we live -- to reject the sins of pride, self-protection and rejection -- to which we are enslaved and which hurt others - and to embrace righteousness -- the love and grace of Christ, which makes others feel welcomed and included.

Jesus said: "Whoever welcomes you, welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me - welcomes the one who sent me."

We pray: *Father God, quench our thirst for the hospitality of your love, and help us make Christ's welcome known to others. Amen.*