

TRINITY 7 2020 (Year A) – Matthew 13:31-33; 44-52; Romans 8: 26-end
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Curate

Who cannot help but smile at the excitement of a child?

Last week I was in the local newsagents when I suddenly heard this little boy getting so excited about a kite that his mum was going to buy for him: “I’ve got a kite, I’ve got a kite.....” his little voice was joyously crying. “Can I really have it? Is it mine, is it really mine?” he asked his mum. And then off he went, skipping down the shop to show and tell his sister. His exuberance and joy contagious.

As we read in our gospel reading of the *hidden treasure* and the *pearl of great value* that brought so much joy to the person who found it that they were willing to sell all they had to possess it, I wonder what is the gift that has brought *us* such excitement and joy.....?

Now I have had some great presents through my life, from different people, but as I thought about today’s readings I was reminded of a conversation I had over 6 years ago now. It was with the Director of Ordinands on my last visit to him before the 3-day interview that would determine whether I would be chosen for ordination training. In way of final preparation, he had asked me what I would say if a couple asked me why they should have their child baptised? My reply was: ‘I would just tell them that knowing God’s love through Jesus was the best present in the world’ Because this is the truth that has changed my life.

To know that I am unconditionally loved by God – that everything I’ve ever done and still continue to do, is forgiven by His unending grace. To be “convinced”, like Paul says in his letter to the Romans, “that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord”..... *this is the best gift in the world!*

This is the hidden treasure that I suddenly came across 30 years ago..... that still excites me and brings me joy (even more than West Ham avoiding relegation!)

This is the pearl of great value that I now wouldn’t swap for the world – that deep assurance that through anything and everything that life throws at me, God will be there, loving me, helping me, guiding me, knowing what’s best for me..... and even carrying me through the darkest times that can strike at any moment.....

Because things happen unexpectedly that will turn our lives upside down – such as what we are living through at the moment. And I just want to digress and say at this point, that it is really important to acknowledge both to ourselves and to others, that we have been and continue to be effected by what’s happening around us.

But there is this pearl, this treasure, that can help..... that can change our lives and bring us joy and peace even through difficult times.....

Jesus refers to it as *the kingdom of heaven* – which for me, is God’s abundant and unconditional love working in and through His whole creation – God’s perfect will working good things in people’s

lives, even out of bad stuff..... Because even before we get to enjoy forever the perfect place called heaven, God actually wants a taste of that for His creation here and now

When Jesus told His disciples to pray to God to 'let His will be done on earth as it is in heaven.....' it was a prayer that people may know, experience, embrace, yield to, and enjoy God's presence with them and in all things, and that we may be part of that living story of God's kingdom of heaven, God's transforming love and peace, here and now.....

Jesus paints wonderfully evocative and meaningful images of the kingdom of heaven in our parables today – not only of treasure and pearls to which I've already eluded, but of mustard seeds and yeast, things that starts off small but can grow to have an enormous impact and effect on what's around them, providing places of safety and sustenance. The kingdom of heaven is God's presence and love working in and through us to have such effect on His whole creation.

But I want to return to the boy and his kite, having been encouraged by verse 52 of our gospel to bring something new to Jesus's images of old.

I don't know whether you've ever had or flown a kite? I often have the chance of seeing them from our window at home in Frinton. As you watch them gently rising, being taken up by the wind into the sky above, there's this great sense of freedom .. something which of course God wants to do for all of us – to set us free from all that causes us anxiety, worry, fear..... to be carried by the wind of His Spirit to view things from above, from God's perspective – from the perspective of knowing that with God all things are possible, that nothing and nobody is beyond redemption, that everybody is loved in His eyes, and deserves respect and grace, that love triumphs over all things, and that God is with us always, and can be trusted...

And it is a child-like trust of which Jesus refers later in Matthew's gospel when he speaks of those to whom the kingdom of heaven belongs (Matthew 19:14)..... The boy in the shop was excited about the kite even though at the time it was only in the bag But he knew what it could do..... He knew what he had seen it do..... He knew what he wanted it to do for him,..... And he wanted to be holding on and connected to this freedom-giving, joy-bringing, best gift in the world.....

"I've got a kite, I've got a kite.... Can I really have it? Is it mine, is it really mine?".....

Yes! God's transforming presence and love is there for every single one of us, to be embraced, to become connected to, and to be enjoyed Be excited about the life-changing freedom it brings to you and others, and let it fill you with joy.....

AMEN