

The Parish of Peasedown St John

The uninvited guest

Luke 22:14-30

Passage, Sermon Notes and Questions

Please feel free to take these sermon notes home with you and you may wish to find some time during this week to consider the questions below.

1. Sermon Passage

Luke 22:14-30

14 When the hour came, Jesus and his apostles reclined at the table.

15 And he said to them, "I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer.

16 For I tell you, I will not eat it again until it finds fulfilment in the kingdom of God."

17 After taking the cup, he gave thanks and said, "Take this and divide it among you.

18 For I tell you I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes."

19 And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me."

20 In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you.

21 But the hand of him who is going to betray me is with mine on the table.

22 The Son of Man will go as it has been decreed, but woe to that man who betrays him."

23 They began to question among themselves which of them it might be who would do this.

24 Also a dispute arose among them as to which of them was considered to be greatest.

25 Jesus said to them, "The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those who exercise authority over them call themselves Benefactors.

26 But you are not to be like that. Instead, the greatest among you should be like the youngest, and the one who rules like the one who serves.

27 For who is greater, the one who is at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one who is at the table? But I am among you as one who serves.

28 You are those who have stood by me in my trials.

29 And I confer on you a kingdom, just as my Father conferred one on me,

30 so that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom and sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

2. Sermon Notes

2.1 Introduction - The uninvited guest

- As the disciples and Jesus sit down for their last meal together and uninvited guest is present with them
- This uninvited guest:
 - Is good at stirring up trouble
 - Is not someone we really want to have around
- He takes the words of Jesus and uses them to get the disciples to begin to focus on themselves. But the hand of him who is going to betray me is with mine on the table. The Son of Man will go as it has been decreed, but woe to that man who betrays him." They began to question among themselves which of them it might be who would do this. (Luke 22:21-24)
- Who is this uninvited guest who gate crashes Jesus' final dinner party? Who is this uninvited guest who has intruded into the life of countless congregations?
- The uninvited guest is Division, a servant of Satan.

2.2 'Division' goes to work on the disciples

- When Jesus says that one of his disciples will betray him, Division goes to work.
- He blinds each disciple to the fact that he has the capacity to betray Jesus.
- They all begin to point fingers. Not literally, but in their minds they point fingers at one another. "Is it Peter?" "Could it be John?" "What about Matthew?"
- Never once did any of them ask, "What if it's me?"
- Luke tells us that their discussion about who the betrayer is turns into an argument about who was the greatest among them.
- Peter thinks to himself, "It can't be me. I was the first one Jesus called. Therefore, I'll be his right-hand man."
- John thinks, "It can't be me. I'm his favourite. I'll make a good second in command."
- Matthew muses, "It's can't be me. My background in taxes qualifies me for the position of managing money."
- Division has succeeded. The disciples are now divided. Now they can easily now be conquered.

2.3 'Division' is Satan's big gun

- No congregation is immune to 'Division's' sting.
- No denomination is too holy for him not to enter.
- No small group is too filled with the Holy Spirit to keep him away.
- 'Division' only needs a small crack in our armour to inject his lethal venom.
- No saint is too holy.
- No preacher is out of his reach.
- No church leader or family is beyond his grasp.
- Satan is very familiar with the words of Jesus, "A house divided cannot stand."
- Division has been powerful enough to divide Christ's church into East and West. He has divided the West into Catholic and Protestant. He has divided the Protestant into untold numbers of denominations and independent groups. Division is certainly not a weak foe. For he only can be removed with much prayer.

2.4 'Division' is alive and well today

- There is still division among Jesus' disciples:
 - division over styles of worship;
 - division over church structure and policy;
 - division over who has authority;
 - division over how the money is spent;
 - division over which translation of the Bible is to be read;
 - division over how one is to be baptized;
 - division over who can participate in Holy Communion.
- There can even be division among Jesus' followers over insignificant things:
 - like the place we sit in church,
 - the clothes we wear
 - or even the type of music we prefer to worship him with.
- But the ugliest and most divisive divisions are always around power and authority.

2.5 Jesus' response to 'Division'

- He took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me." In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you. (Luke 22:19-20)
- There is but one table that Jesus invites us to. It is his table. It is not an Anglican table. It isn't a Baptist table. It isn't a Methodist table. It isn't a Protestant table. It isn't a Catholic table. It is the Lord's Table.
- Jesus served all the disciples at his table, even Judas. The body and blood of Jesus is for all who profess him as Lord and King. It is at the Lord's Table that all our differences and divisions should disappear.
- Division may have succeeded in dividing Christ's Church, but Jesus has found a way to bring us back together. Jesus gave to the Apostle Paul the perfect analogy of the church: a human body. Yes, we are different. Just as each part of the body is different. But we are united because together, we make the Church.
- It is the body and blood of Jesus that unites us. As long as we proclaim Jesus as Lord, we are united.
- As we approach this time of Easter again and as we reflect on what Jesus did for his disciples at his last meal together with them let's be encouraged to lay aside our differences and to work together to share the good news of the Kingdom. Let us cast out the demon of division and work together for the sake of Jesus.

3. Questions to consider back at home

3.1 What happened at the Last Supper to cause division amongst the disciples? What can we learn from this?

3.2 How would you describe the church family in PSJ at the moment? United or Divided? What things unite us? What things divide us? How might we seek greater unity?

3.3 A good friend of yours describes the situation in her church at the moment. She tells you that her church is split over whether to put a carpet in the chancel. One group feel that the carpet will make the church warmer, more welcoming, less dangerous for the children and match the rest of the church that was carpeted two years previously. The other group made up mainly of the choir do not want the carpet as they feel it will spoil the acoustics of the church, particularly when they are singing. One member of the choir is particularly upset because the carpet will cover a memorial plaque to a medieval relative who passed away in 1671. What advice would you give your friend? Imagine that you are Vicar of this church what would you do?

If you would like to discuss these questions further please feel free to call me on 01761 432293