

**Sermon by The Very Rev Sue Jones, Dean of Liverpool.
Matthew 13 31-33, 44-52**

Imagine sitting in a lecture theatre and all of a sudden the presenter begins their talk with the Question:

The Kingdom of Heaven is like...

And then before your eyes on the screen a whole set of images flash up.....

Seeds

Yeast

Treasure

A pearl

A net.

It is through these images that Jesus tells us about the Kingdom of Heaven.

The Kingdom of heaven is like a seed. A seed is so small, so dead, so hopeless when it is first planted. Yet with the right conditions of water, sun and soil it grows into something beautiful and life giving.

The same is true of the seeds of faith when planted in our lives. The initial seed may seem so small, so hopeless, so dry yet with the right conditions of prayer, reading the scripture and learning the faith something beautiful and life giving grows.

The Kingdom of heaven is like yeast. Without yeast, flour, salt and water remains a sticky mess. Yet with yeast the mixture takes on a life of its own. It is secret and silent. We cannot see what it is doing. But we can experience its affect and see the bounty that is the Kingdom of Heaven.

As disciples in this diocese Bishop Paul is calling us to ask God for a Bigger Church making a bigger difference; more people knowing Jesus more justice in the world. We are called to be the yeast, to be the sticky mess, sent to serve those in need, and to give our time talents and money back to God. We are called to be agents of growth through who we are and what we do.

The kingdom of Heaven is like yeast. The kingdom came into the world in the form of a tiny baby. It changed the lives of those first disciples. It transformed a Pharisee called Paul and began to spread throughout the world. It changed you and me.

The Kingdom of Heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. The one who finds it by accident, in the daily round of life sells everything else and goes and buys the field. Once the Kingdom of Heaven is discovered everything else is worthless.

The values of power, wealth and sex cease to be the Gods which drive life. What drives us is our relationship with the one true God and God's Son Jesus Christ. What makes us followers of the one true God is the call to an inner life of prayer, the call to read scripture and the call to learn from one another. But our call does not end in the inner life we are called to bring in the Kingdom of heaven through the outer journey of service and giving.

The Kingdom of heaven is like a pearl of great price. There are some of us who believe passionately that God is alive in our world. We believe that God and the Kingdom of Heaven is our pearl of Great Price. Many work tirelessly to establish the truth, that God is alive and amongst us. Many seek the truth through prayer, through studying the scriptures, by listening to the stories that others tell of their journeys of faith. These disciples rejoice in the truth and pray to God for a Bigger Church making a Bigger Difference.

The Kingdom of Heaven is like a net. Nets are the tools of the fisherman.

Many fish are caught some are kept some are discarded. We I guess, have been caught in the net of the kingdom of heaven, but in the presence of God's grace we know ourselves to be self-important. In the presence of God's outgoing love we know ourselves to be self centred. We have to work at being a disciple in the Kingdom of Heaven and that work involves prayer, study of the scripture and learning from one another. But we cannot stay in our own bubble, In our inner journey, we have to move to the outer journey and work to bring in the kingdom of heaven through service to those in need. Through the giving of our time, talents and money.

The Kingdom of Heaven is here amongst us and as we ask God for a bigger church making a bigger difference we pray for ourselves as disciples of Christ and we pray for a Covid 19 world that has seen glimpses of the Kingdom of Heaven.

The Kingdom of Heaven is a seed, it is yeast, it is treasure to be stumbled upon, a pearl to be sought out. It is a net which seeks us and sorts us out. The Kingdom of Heaven is here amongst us. Amen