

Reflection 27th September

Matthew 21:23-32

The idea of Christian service is one which is at the heart of our faith. That as followers of Jesus we are called to serve the needs of each other, and particularly to seek out for those who are truly in need and serve them is one of the key things that we should all do. This is one of the themes of the second part of our gospel reading today. The man says to his first son to go and work in the vineyard - he's a bit reluctant at first but eventually does what is asked of him. The second says that he will, but doesn't actually go. It's a warning to us that simply saying the right thing or perhaps acting in a particular way which we think will give us favour is not enough: even if we are reluctant at first we are still called to be faithful in service when we are called to do so.

The reason why Christian service is so important is not to win favour with God or to make God love us more - as I have said many times, nothing we can do can make God love us any more or any less, God's love is simply a given. The reason why service is so important is because it is an imitation of the way of Christ. As Christians we are called to model our lives on that of Jesus who, as our epistle reminds us today in that famous hymn from Philippians, though he was in the form of God emptied himself, taking the form of a slave.

It is not always easy serving others. Whilst many people will bless us for our service, others may not be so thankful, and some may even try to take advantage. For Jesus serving others and loving the world so much ended up with him being nailed to the Cross. But as we know that Cross led to a greater glory, the glory of the Resurrection. Although the path of following Jesus through love and service may sometimes be hard, we know that it will always lead to a greater glory - the greater glory of God seen in this world, and the glory we will encounter with Him in the next.

Rev'd Tom