

Homily for 5th Sunday after Trinity

These days you often come across the phrase:-

"What you see is what you get!"

But is that always the case? Perhaps not!

*Sometimes things can be misleading - sometimes there can be another agenda.

*Sometimes things are not what they first seem.

*Sometimes we need to look beyond the obvious.

Perhaps, as Christians, that's what we are programmed to do.

By that I mean being a Christian means:-

"Seeing things in a different light."

Today we have a wonderful example of looking beyond the obvious.

At level one Jesus tells a rather nice story.

But as Christians we look at these stories - these parables in a different way. We ask the question - What was Jesus teaching us about?

These stories carry a message a message that Jesus wanted the people to understand so he wrapped his message in something the people would find familiar.

However, all these stories demand a response.

They were a personal challenge to the people he met and are a challenge to us today.

I believe our response to them depends on how open to God we are.

How ready we are to think in a new way.

That, of course, is down to faith.

Our faith opens our eyes to a new dimension of life.

13 v 16,17

But blessed are your eyes, for they see, and your ears, for they hear.

Truly I tell you, many prophets and righteous people longed to see what you see, but did not see it, and to hear what you hear, but did not hear it.

Jesus says, you have faith so you see and you hear and you understand whereas those who have yet to meet with Jesus will see and hear but won't understand as you do.

Maybe that's a warning for us about what we can expect in our desire to grow our church.

So using our eyes and ears what does Jesus say in our reading from Matthew?

The farmer scatters the seed.

(We share the word of God)

Some falls on the path where the ground is hard.

It's been trampled down by many feet so the seed stays on the surface.

(Maybe that's what happens to some people today who feel they have been trampled down by the world. They have developed a hard skin that is part of their self preservation mechanism. So the

word goes in one ear and out of the other.
Perhaps they live their lives with the sign "do not disturb" round their shoulders.
So how do we disturb these people?)

Then some seed falls on the rocky soil. It starts to grow but there is not enough soil to support the plants so they perish.
(Have you noticed how many people turn to Jesus when they face trouble. It's not surprising really - they feel a need to believe in something to hold on to but when the trouble fades so does their need for support.
So when people turn to the church for support how can we show them that Jesus is for good days as well as bad?)

Some seed falls in with the thorns so it starts to grow and then the weeds catch up and choke to good seed.
(These days there are so many pressures demanding our time - they can choke our spiritual lives. It has been said two things can't occupy the same space at the same time. Now I am a man so I know all too well you can't do two things at once - well half the population can't. People today have lives filled with important distractions so how can we as Christians demonstrate that there is something worth finding the space for?)

Then some seed fell on the good soil and it grew and gave a good crop.
(I think sometimes this last bit is glossed over. There are people who listen, people who are prepared to give God their undivided attention that is - if only they were given the chance.)

So what can this mean for us as we try to grow our church.
Perhaps a good starting point would be those who have not been asked the question. I wonder do you know anyone who falls into this category?
That is personal evangelism:-
We are having a special even at church would you like to come with me?
Note the "come with me" bit. Not just come. If you are a gardener you know that picking up stones and weeding can be a bit of a challenge and so it is with taking Jesus to some people. It can take time and effort and like the stones and weeds they seem to multiply but that's still not an excuse for not trying. But maybe that's more of a long term project.

Perhaps Jesus is saying "look for opportunities" and be brave.
In years gone by I have heard people say "That's not for me!"
Do you know the "Meat Loaf" song:- " I would do anything for love but I won't do that!"

Well I am sure you will have met lot's of
Christians who would say:-

"I will do anything for God but I won't do that!"

That's not typical in our church. But just maybe
we all have boundaries that hold us back?

I wonder, without knowing do we ever put limits
on what we are prepared to do for the Kingdom?

I know in the past I have.

When I was ordained I said I couldn't be a
hospice chaplain - I soon was!!

Ok God you win!!

Never say never!

So if we want to grow our church let's be bold and
as the song says:-

"Be bold be strong for the Lord your God is with
you!"

And then we can all say:- "I will do anything for
God and I will do that!"