

Trinity 6, Proper 10

- Deuteronomy 30:9-14. **observing his commandments** and decrees that are written in this book of the law, K of G **is not in heaven**, neither is it beyond the sea. **No, the word is very near to you; it is in your mouth and in your heart for you to observe.**
- Psalm 25:1-10. To you, O LORD, I lift up my soul. All his paths are faithfulness etc
- Colossians 1:1-14
- Luke 10:25-37. Good Samaritan

Attacked by robbers? What are these robbers?

- Of course, we may be attacked by others.
- But psychological robbers:
 - the way we choose to react. Concentration camp story.
 - ourselves, our pride, our selfishness, our determination to prove that we are in control. The things that rob us of who we really are. They might be obsessions, attachments, things that we are dependent upon. Things that limit us. Things that prevent us from seeing all the possibilities of the world that are open to us.
- Sin is a life un-lived, and we so often limit the way we live in order to satisfy these inner compulsions of ours. Thus we limit ourselves. Sin
- The things that hide the divine light that is within us by covering it up. Like a lens that distorts our view of the world, and distorts what people see when they look at us – mirrors at fairgrounds, shards of glass in Snow Queen that entered Kay, made beautiful things look ugly and *vice versa*.

And eventually we collapse, on the way down from Jerusalem to Bethany.

Going down

- At our lowest we are vulnerable, receptive to help.
- At rock bottom – as if layers of pride around us have been stripped away by our fall

And who comes and helps us?

- Not the glamorous, not the fashionable, not the attractive.
- Not the people who do things because they obey the rules: road to Jerusalem – priests would be passing, thinking they were doing the right thing.
- Rather the things that we least expect. We don't need to do anything to ask for help, it just comes. But we have to be ready to receive it: completely stripped of our pride and dignity.

And look at the help

- Utilitarian, useful, practical. No finger wagging, no shoulds, no conditions. No hanging about to be grateful to. Think of all those presents you got when you were young from your aunt or whatever,. Stuff you didn't want and didn't need, and yet you were made to write thank you letters you didn't want to write. Pointless rubbish. None of that.
- The Samaritan didn't hang around to be said thank you to. Neither did he hang around to supervise – he went on his way. Came back later to see that you are OK.

Kingdom of God

It is not in heaven, or beyond the sea, **No, the word is very near to you; it is in your mouth and in your heart for you to observe.**

It is very near, but these layers separate us from it.

It's at moments of down-ness and being helped that the K of G is very near. Not when you're dead, but here and now: the kingdom of God is within you. But we can't get at it because of all those layers we cover ourselves up with. Layers. Dolls. Shrek

So what?

We try too hard.

The comforting message from this is that however awful we may feel at moments of down-ness, we can stop trying. Take comfort in the fact that they can, if we choose, let them lead us to the kingdom of God. Just accept what is offered – don't be proud like Edna Birch.

Hell then is our failure to accept the K of G. It is not somewhere we are sent: it is a state of mind that we propel ourselves into by refusing the love of God.

And help is always on offer, always ready to come and meet us. It is we who so often feel unworthy, but this is our choice. We only have to choose to accept.