

Homily The Cup of Cold Water
A Sermon for Trinity 4
Matthew 10.40–42 & Romans 6.12–23

28th June Christ Church West Wimbledon

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May I speak in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

I wonder if I asked you this morning,

"What is the greatest thing you could do for God this week?"

What would your answer be?

Perhaps you might say:

- Give more to the church and/or charity.
- Volunteer for a good cause.
- Tell someone about Jesus.
- Pray more faithfully.

All of these are wonderful answers but I wonder many of us would reply,

"Offer someone a glass of water."

Yet that is exactly where Jesus takes us in today's Gospel. He says

"Whoever gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones..."

Not a miracle or a heroic act of sacrifice on this occasion, just a cup of cold water. The Kingdom of God so often grows, not only through spectacular moments, but simple acts of love.

The world often tells us that bigger is better: bigger achievements, bigger churches, bigger impact. But Jesus turns the world's values upside down. The first shall be last. The meek shall inherit the earth. The greatest must become servants. Today he tells us that something as small as a cup of cold water matters to heaven, because of the love with which it is given.

Our reading from Romans echoes this beautifully. St Paul tells us that, because we belong to Christ, we are to offer ourselves to God as *"instruments of righteousness."* Notice how practical that is. He's talking

about ordinary lives offered to our extraordinary God. Our hands can serve. Our voices can encourage. Our hearts can welcome. Our time can comfort. Our generosity can bless.

In other words, Paul explains what Jesus teaches. The Christian life is lived through thousands of ordinary choices to offer ourselves to God, and every act of kindness becomes another way of worshipping him.

Jesus then takes us one step further. *"Whoever welcomes you welcomes me."*

What an interesting thought: when we welcome another person, we welcome Christ himself. Hospitality isn't simply good manners. It is holy. Throughout Scripture, God delights in arriving as the unexpected guest. Abraham welcomed three strangers. The disciples recognised the risen Jesus while breaking bread at Emmaus. Again and again, God comes to people through ordinary acts of welcome. No wonder Hebrews tells us,

"Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers..."

We all know what it feels like to receive a poor welcome; Perhaps you've walked into a shop and nobody looked up. Or visited a restaurant where the staff seemed annoyed you'd interrupted their conversation. Or arrived somewhere and wondered whether anyone even noticed you. But we also know the opposite. One smile. One handshake. One person remembering your name. One genuine conversation. Sometimes that is all it takes for someone to feel they belong.

Every Sunday gives us opportunities to practice this Gospel.

Do we notice the person sitting beside us?

Do we ask how their week has been?

Do we invite them to join us afterward for refreshments?

Every week someone walks through these doors wondering whether anyone will notice them.

Perhaps someone is new. Perhaps someone who is lonely or grieving. Perhaps someone who is anxious. Or perhaps someone who has been coming for many years but still doesn't quite feel they belong.

And that is where every one of us has a ministry. Not just the clergy. Not just the churchwardens. Not just the stewards but every one of us.

So here is my challenge.

Before you leave church today, speak to someone you don't normally speak to.

Learn their name.

Ask how they are.

Invite them to stay for coffee.

Perhaps if you can, sit somewhere different next week.

Notice the person standing on their own.

It sounds like such a small thing. But then, so does a cup of cold water. And Jesus says those small acts matter. They matter because every person matters. Every welcome matters. Every act of kindness points to the God who first welcomed us.

May we continue to offer ourselves to God.

May we continue to offer hope to our community.

May we continue to offer Christ to every person who walks through these doors.

And may every cup of tea...every smile...every conversation... every act of generosity...become another cup of cold water offered in the name of Jesus. For in the Kingdom of God, no act of love is ever wasted.

To him be all honour and glory, now and for ever. Amen.