

October 16, 2016

Readings chosen

Genesis 32: 22-31 2 Timothy: 3: 14-4: 5 Luke 18: 1-8 Psalm 119: 97-104

Are you enjoying your retirement?

Is it anything like you thought it would be?

Having seen 'retirement' in preceding generations as you were growing up, hasn't it changed a lot?

We have lived (and continue to live) through a period of great change – perhaps more than any other generation – from what will hopefully be the last 'World war' into the age of computers and space travel.

This has changed the way we live – and our ability to choose where we live – but, has it changed anything fundamental in the way we live. What does our 'guide book' say on this subject?

Our second reading today was from St Paul's 2nd letter to Timothy and, possibly, the last letter Paul was going to write. In this epistle, Paul reveals his heart and emphasises his priorities – sound doctrine, confident endurance and lasting love

In the early part of Chapter 3, Paul warns of the false teachers that will abound in the world

who will attempt to deceive others and in the later part he emphasises the importance of adhering to Scripture – the source of all our knowledge about God and our 'guide' in this life to bring us successfully to the next one.

But, how are we supposed to spend our retirement? Paul sends Timothy (and, through him, us) a list of things to be getting on with -

We should

Preach the word of God – whether its a good time or a bad time

Have our minds open to this all the time

Not be afraid of suffering – or, more likely these days, of mockery

Our gospel reading for today endorses this attitude of persistence with the parable of the widow who repeatedly went before a judge to ask for justice in a dispute with her neighbour. Eventually, the judge gave her justice – but, not necessarily for the right reasons. Jesus goes on to make the point that if the unjust judge gave the widow her

justice, how much more will our heavenly father give us justice (ie answer our prayers) – and a lot more quickly.

Our Old Testament reading today also talks about persistence being rewarded – this time in the case of Jacob who wrestled all night but was eventually blessed by God and given a new name to commemorate this event.

And then our psalm for this morning talks about not only reading and understanding the word of God but also about applying it in our lives. The psalmist is obviously really enjoying the words he is reading and studying, reflecting on them all the time and trying to apply them in his life.

And, to summarise, what does all this teach us, in our present situation. We may feel a little like a ship without a rudder after Caroline's departure but we have our instructions and the examples of those who have gone before us.

We all have an individual responsibility to learn and apply God's instructions - to study His word and to obey it in our lives – without fear or shame.

Some things have changed for the better – we are unlikely to lose our lives for our faith as Paul was to do shortly after writing this letter to Timothy – and we must not let other people's opinions defer us from the path we know to be the right one – and the right one is that which we find laid out for us in God's word.

Read, understand and follow – this is our message for today

Enjoy your retirement here in France

Polly Ward