

LOCKDOWN DAY 91 – 25 JUNE 2020

Good day dear family and many friends of False Bay Diocese,

Scripture: Matthew 7:21-29

Song: *When I look into your Holiness*

Firstly, a few notices: Given the recent developments in the spread of the Coronavirus, we are likely to reach a spike, and in the light thereof, we would assess mid-July whether to open our churches for **in person** worship. Your clergy and Churchwardens have a copy of The Gender Based Violence Statement in the three languages of our Diocese. It is also on our website. I have received several requests to not yet completely relinquish these reflections. I accept that appeal and with God's help will continue. This is the last one for this week, but I will continue on Monday.

Previously I posed the question whether we are **true followers** of Jesus or **merely admirers**? Today's gospel reading also reminds us that we run the risk of rendering God mere lip service. We call upon the Lord in prayer, are faithful to our duties of religion and piety and may be members of various church related associations, participating in her ministries. While all this is good, it is not good enough. That is why Jesus says that the test of real Christian behaviour is not merely calling out to him "Lord, Lord!" but doing the will of his heavenly Father. Obedience to God's will therefore is the barometer of authentic virtue. Words without deeds are like leaves without fruit. Built on, and guided by the wisdom of God's word, we will be able to withstand all storms, including the build-up to the eye of the Coronavirus storm.

Being on high alert during lockdown, has been a time of **rekindling the fire** of Christ's calling on our lives. Are we genuinely still **on fire for the Messiah**? I believe that we are. Our relationship with the Lord is crucial, especially, at this time. We need to tap into God's wisdom and we will see how limited our own understanding is in comparison. We ponder God's great love and in that great love God answers us. Live in the moment. Be rooted and grounded in God's love. When we feel weak, it is our relationship with our Lord that sustains us. Elvis Presley sings: *"Put your hand in the hand of the Lord who stilled the water ...Take a look at yourself and you can look at others differently. Put your hand in the hand of the man from Galilee."* The most impressive structures will fail if the foundations are not strong.

The basic needs of a community are: **Safety and Security. Affection** and by affection I mean to love and be loved. **Power and Control.** Not harmful and superficial Power and Control. Power and Control given by Jesus. Everything we have is a gift from God and as we receive it, we ask God how God would like us to use this received gift to improve the life of others? Freely we have received; Freely give of our time, talents, money. If we are honest, we will recognize that so sometimes we do say 'Lord, Lord' but they remain lip service. Let us listen to God's guidance, rather than relying on our own ideas and agenda. **What do you have that you did not receive? And if you did receive it, why do you boast as though you did not?** This is a good question for **Stewardship month.** I encourage you to read paragraphs 83 and 84 on Stewardship on page 435 of An Anglican Prayer Book. Maybe you have not browsed through the Catechism recently so while you are busy, also look on page 425, paragraphs 21 and 22, to see what our duty is towards God and towards our neighbours.

In our passage today, Jesus stresses that Jesus needs to be at the helm of our lives if we are to enjoy an enduring destiny in God's presence. Jesus is checking in that we do not rely merely on outer activity, however spiritually impressive it is but our relationship with Jesus is empty. Those who have heeded and responded to the call of God on our lives, will find themselves part of a work that is enduringly fruitful, as it flows from personal faithfulness to God's call. God alone brings life to our Spirit. What counts is our relationship with Jesus. It is not sufficient to say, *"I don't know the Lord, I just work for him."* Do we dare to let God really be in charge, or do we prefer to call the shots, even when it comes to doing God's work?

It is sometimes said that Christians are like tea bags; it is when they are put into hot water that their real flavour emerges. Can others taste the fragrance of Christ in us when the heat is on?

Today please **reach out** to someone who has lost a loved one during the past 100 days, no matter the cause of death. As we are in the peak of the virus, many families have lost two members of the same family. Keep our clergy in deep prayer for wisdom and protection. **Reach out** to them as well.

In **our prayers** we invite Jesus to help us conduct an inventory of our hearts. What are our motivations for the religious practices that we have embraced? How does the love in our heart express itself in action on behalf of the most vulnerable? We end our prayers with **The Collect for Purity** on the top of page 105 of An Anglican Prayer Book. Amen

I am, Because we Are, Because God is ... Opening hearts to heal God's world. *Lord show us the way we should go.*