

IF GOD IS FOR US, WHO CAN BE AGAINST US?

Address with Rajie

Dear Friends. Greeting in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

It's good to be able to share some of my thoughts with you today.

The words "If God is for us, who can be against us?" has been ringing in my ears for some time.

It so happened that, it is in one of our lectionary passages for today from the letter to the Romans Ch 8.

So I like to look at how that relates to our gospel message of Jesus' parables.

We all spend time in prayer don't we?

Some may have dedicated time, some may pray ad hoc basis, and some pray any time, all day long. Some pray only when they are in need or in trouble.

When you pray do you expect God's action? Do you expect the answer to your prayer? Do you expect him to show his power and grant what you ask for?

Sometimes we may recite a favourite prayer or a prayer that we are used to over and over again and may not even think of the words we are saying and its meanings.

Week on week or even on daily basis we are used to saying the Lord's Prayer. Don't we?

Lord's Prayer is an incredibly a powerful prayer. We not only ask for what we need we also allow God to grant what he wants.

We say "your Kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven!" don't we?

In our reading from Matthew's gospel, Jesus is giving examples of kingdom in 2 parables.

Jesus says, the kingdom of God is like a mustard seed planted in the field. It is the smallest of all seeds. I am not sure how many of you use mustard seeds, I certainly use on a daily basis and I know how small it is. (show seeds if possible). When it is planted, it grows and become a large plant like a tree with branches, where birds can come and perch on it and make nests in its branches.

Here we see a small tiny seed giving life to a tree. A small beginning of a plant becoming a big tree producing great results, great opportunities.

It allows the birds to nest on its branches, providing shade, shelter and security for the birds.

Jesus is saying the kingdom of God needs to start as small as the mustard seed to achieve great things for God. Can we be that mustard seed?

Jesus has previously spoken about the mustard seed faith to his disciples and we too are called to have the faith of a mustard seed to see God's glory.

Here, in this passage he is not talking about that, he is saying and reflecting on the tiny mustard seed which starts a new beginning.

If we can be those seeds, he is telling us, that we can be of great use for God's kingdom.

Obviously we are not trees, but we can be like a strong, large tree with our life so that we can help and support all those around us.

We can be that, anchor that others can lean on us for support. Physical, emotional or spiritual support.

Particularly, during these past 4 months we all have been in lockdown and had very limited or no access or encounter with our family and friends.

We know it is beginning to ease somewhat, but still we need to be careful and be aware of the second wave of infection that is expected.

Everyone is still in fear, tension and anxiety.

When Paul says, "If God is for us who can be against us?"

The answer is "NO ONE". Not even this pandemic. Trials and sufferings of life may indicate that our future, our finances, our job security, our children, our health issues all may be against us.

But no one can separate us from the love of God in Jesus Christ.

That is the glory of the Christian message.

Then Jesus talked about the kingdom of God is like the yeast, a woman used in baking bread.

I know, I have been baking a lot of bread during these past 4 months, which I never did before. I am sure so many of you also must have done it.

Sure enough, I learnt that a small amount of yeast does help to permeate the whole loaf.

Yes, God's kingdom is like that Jesus says, although it begins with small acts of kindness, it will soon grow and have great impact on our neighbours, community and the world.

We may feel our hands are tied and we cannot do anything to anyone at this time, but Jesus says everything starts with a small beginning and it can do great things. That is the secret of the Kingdom of God.

We might live in a time of tension.

We might struggle with our emotions;

We might feel weak and vulnerable;

We might constantly get things wrong;

We might fail to live up to our own standard;

We might be rubbish at prayer, not even knowing what to pray for, let alone find the words;

But nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

The Lord who calmed the storm in the Sea of Galilee is ready to calm the storms we are facing too.

So even if we live in tension and uncertainties, let us accept the frustrations of our inabilities and

weakness.

Let's not hate ourselves.

Nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus.

That is why Jesus said even the smallest amount of yeast or the tiniest seed, can be the small beginnings that can do great things and open greater opportunities for everyone.

As we heard from Romans, Paul clearly says, (Rom 8:28) "we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose".

So we are called to be that mustard seed and that yeast which is small and nearly invisible to work through and have great impact on the world to expand God's Kingdom.

If God is for us, who can be against us??

May God use us to expand his Kingdom.

Amen.

Stay safe and be blessed.

God bless you.