

A Proper 6 am
Place: St Mary's
5.1-8

18th June 2017
Ex 19/2-8a Rom

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Theme: Sin and God's call Matt 9.35-10.23

- ◆ When life is going well for us we can wonder about the meaning of the churches message of salvation from sin. When we are prosperous and enjoy good relationships with family and friends sin can seem rather a distant and unnecessary idea. Events over the past few weeks have reminded us all of the terrible, destructive power of sin.
- ◆ Sin leads to the malice and evil of suicide bombers and attacker, who believed that destroying the lives of others and themselves can somehow serve God. Anyone who believes this does not know God and has made from themselves an idol of great wickedness.
- ◆ It is also human sin that leads to more mundane vices like folly and self-centredness. It is this, what we might think of as lesser sins than those of suicide murders, that seem to be responsible for the death and suffering of so many residents in Grenfell Tower. No one intended it to happen, but it looks like a combination of poor regulation, doing things on the cheap and ignoring the concerns of the poor and the vulnerable all contributed to the disaster.
- ◆ It is sobering to reflect that probably more people died as a result of folly and selfishness

than as a result of malice and evil in these terrible recent events.

- ◆ In our first reading today Moses tells the people of God that his plans for them are good and unfolds the kind of life he is bringing them to in the promised land. They will be at home with God, his Holy nation. They are going to have a foretaste of what God wants for all creation. We see this vision then extended to the whole of creation in our Psalm. This is what God wants for the world.
- ◆ Sadly, the world has fallen short of what God wants it to be. Rather than being the sheep of God's pasture, who know God and know that we belong to God we have all gone astray and become lost in the wilderness of this world.
- ◆ The world has lost touch with God and people worship false gods instead. The worship of false gods leads to death and destruction, whether they are the gods of a death cult like Isis and Al Kaida or the more familiar domestic gods of self, wealth and family.
- ◆ In Christ God comes to bring us back to himself, to restore all that is lost and broken by sin and to overcome sin and death through the cross.
- ◆ In our Gospel today we heard Jesus sending out the 12 disciples on mission. That mission is still the same today, although since Pentecost it is addressed not just to the lost sheep of Israel, but

to all who are lost in this world, all who are trapped and diminished by sin.

- ◆ Jesus says: ‘proclaim the good news, cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons. Do it without payment.’ Jesus gave this commission 2000 years ago, but it is still our commission today. All of us are Christ’s disciples and this is what Jesus is calling each of us here at St Mary’s to do.
- ◆ Now you might say to me ‘but Mandy, there are no lepers in Wimbledon and I am not sure that I believe in demons and I can’t heal the sick or raise the dead – and to be frank I am not very enthusiastic about the idea of proclaiming the good news. Isn’t that more the sort of thing Emmanuel and St Luke’s do?’
- ◆ My answer to you is, first of all to wonder ‘Are there really no lepers in Wimbledon?’ Then to encourage you to see beyond the historical context of Jesus words and see that at the heart of them is a message that is just as relevant today as it was 2000 years ago.
- ◆ We are called to bring hope. That is what proclaiming the Kingdom of God means. We are called to bring healing, to challenge and oust evil when we find it. We are called to bring new life where all seems lost. We are called to reach out to the despised and the rejected. We are called to do this not for money, but out of love. We are called to live lives that are grounded in God’s

economy of generosity and grace rather than the world's economy of exchange and exploitation.

- ◆ If we are to be truly the church, if we are to be disciples of Christ, this is what we need to do. It is hard and sometimes dangerous work. It is costly and risky, but it is God's work in the world. God will give us what we need so we can do it. No, we cannot do any of these things in our own strength, but that is not what God is calling us to do. God will give us, through his Holy Spirit, all that we need to play our part and to make our contribution to bringing his Kingdom in. We do not and cannot do it on our own, but in God's strength we can play our part joyfully and hopefully. This is the vocation of the Church.
- ◆ I want St Mary's to be a church where
- ◆ We learn together to recognise God's voice and hear when God calls us.
- ◆ We are obedient to that call and courageous in going out into the world
- ◆ We are drawing others to join us as disciples here, as we discover together the joy and wonder of recognising God at work in our lives and our world, overcoming the old order of sin and death and bringing hope to the world.