

Notes on Matthew 6:33, 13 : 24 – 30 ‘Seek first the Kingdom’

Have you worshipped in a non-English speaking country? What was it like? I've had the privilege of worshipping in Cluj in Romania and in Kathmandu in Nepal. In Cluj I was the preacher after the country freed itself from its dictator Ceausescu who had ruled for many years. In Kathmandu, I worshipped in both an English-speaking Ex Pat church and a Nepali house church the day after the assassination of the reigning members of their royal family who were considered to be like gods. I also had the privilege of being in Birmingham at the centenary of the Baptist World Congress in 2005 where each of the continents led worship using their mother tongues and music, which gave a very different and exciting feel to each time of worship and message. This year's harvest theme is also very different from the usual BMS focus, as this year we're not thinking about agricultural, educational or medical development but on the ministry of Bina and James who are sharing Jesus with the tea workers in Bangladesh.

Harvest, and fruitfulness, are frequent references Jesus uses in his parables like the Sower, the vineyard tenants and the gardener who digs manure around the trees. We live in a world of hunger, poverty, educational and medical need and we are called to minister to these needs in the name of Jesus and to demonstrate the presence of the Kingdom of Heaven among us, yet we must not lose sight also of the value and importance of the eternal harvest and we will do so by seeing through the very different eyes of Bina and James as they minister in Bangladesh. We saw this clearly in the video describing Bina and James's ministry and as we heard these verses in Matthew, they invite us to be fellow workers in this harvest field too. As fellow workers Bina and James firstly, encourage us to know we have a common enemy who is also at work in these fields. In Bangladesh, a Muslim majority county, the reality and presence of such evil is fully accepted and in the Muslim call to prayer, which happens five times a day with the volume set on max, it is believed that the sound of the call drives away the devil. Here in Dronfield our town doesn't acknowledge this with its indifference to God and influence of the seductive power of affluence and comfort which deafens people to God. Last Sunday at the Civic Service I was commended by someone for not saying much about 'religion' and though I can understand why he said that it also showed his disinterest and distaste for that which is most important.

Bina and James secondly, encourage us to learn patience as we wait for the weeds to be pulled up. This means that we need to learn to be patient with both God and with each other as we give time for change to happen.

We are to learn that God's timing and his methods are not our own and that we are to grow in the wisdom of waiting for God to work in people and in situations according to his will. This does not mean that we are to be passive and indifferent to what we see around us or be negligent in speaking for Jesus, but it does mean that we are to realise that we are not in the driving seat.

Bina and James finally encourage us to love and offer life to all people we meet. At the Civic Service last Sunday one of the team from the Miniver Academy, Megan Young, wrote a poem which celebrates life here in Dronfield and I've included it below. When we had a chat later on we both said it was wonderful how much of what she said resonated with what I said and neither of us were aware of that until last Sunday. As much as I love celebrating life here, I know that life in Jesus is far better. This week I will be at the 'Everyone, Everywhere' Conference in Sheffield where its focus is on encouraging and empowering the whole church to be confident witnesses for Jesus. Alongside this the Leadership Team this month have an afternoon together to pray over and think through a new Missional statement which states our missional purpose as a church. Finally, we will be creating an evangelistic calendar of training and events so that we as a church will know a harvest of lives for Jesus like Bina and James are experiencing in Bangladesh.

Whether it be in urban or suburban London or here in Dronfield I love celebrating harvest in all that it speaks to us as a church. Harvest is our inspiration to be a grateful and a responsive people to God's tangible goodness and love we know in our lives in so many ways. May it be our prayer that we will see a full harvest of lives won to Jesus in and through our own individual lives and through the life of this church.

Poem performed by the Miniver Academy

Welcome to our poem - about Dronfield, where we are.
A hub of helpful humans. People come from near and far
To visit the sights, the schools, the pubs. The Green Dragon for a swig.
Schools? There's St Andrews, William Levick. Don't forget Gorseybrigg!
On Thursdays there's a market, in the car park across the way,
Church-wise there's St John the Baptist for those who want to pray.
We're on the edge of Derbyshire, there's Dronfield Woodhouse and Coal
Aston.
Why is Dronfield called Dronfield? I bet he's glad you asked him.
The land used to be filled with drones. What's that? Well, they're bees.
Glad they're gone or I'd use the Railway Station to do a runner and leave.
Flowing nearby, we have our river, the delightful River Drone
And the historic Hall Barn to grab a bite to eat. How about a scone?
We're performing there at Christmas. Spoilers for November!
During the Christmas Light Switch-On. So many songs we've got to
remember.
It's not just us that's theatre-mad. There's tons of clubs and groups,
Once Civic shows are finished, it's afters at the Stoops.
The town's musicals and pantomimes range from dramatic to silly,
Evita and the Full Monty are on next month if you want to see a... good
show.
The Galas, Dronfest, and the Arts Festival incorporate local creatives,
The Peak District or at the Sports Centre is where you'll find the athletic
natives.
We're twinned with Sindelfingen and so Fanshawe School does arrange
For students to visit every year through a successful German exchange.
Speaking of Sindelfingen, that's my park. Cliffe is the one near me.
For sporty folk there's Dronfield Town and Dronfield AFC.
The trusty reporters from the Dronfield Eye cover all major events,
I saw a photographer earlier on although I'm not sure where they went,
Make sure to get my good side, before this ridiculous poem ends.
Can it be soon? I've had enough and so have all my friends.
Okay, we're done. Our poem is over. We've rocked the Civic Service,
We've projected loud, enunciated. Even Sheffield heard this.
We've used our voices rhyming about the greatest town there's ever been,
There's nowhere else I'd rather live than Dronfield, S18.

Megan Young