

2024-10-06 ... Harvest Evensong Sermon ... Revd Pippa White
Joshua 1: 7 – end; Matthew 10: 1 - 22

Will you pray with me? Almighty God, through your written word and your spoken word, may we know your living word, Jesus Christ our saviour. Amen.

If you were listening to the Old Testament reading, and thinking, hmmm, that sounds a bit familiar... I wouldn't blame you!

Because if we think about what's happening in this passage, it does ring a bell, doesn't it?

We have a male prophet, leading the Israelites to a huge river, and God says that if they do what God tells them, the water of that river will be stopped, and the Israelites will be able to pass through on the dry riverbank onto their journey, and they can carry on in safety.

If you're thinking, I'm pretty sure Moses did something very similar with the Red Sea, count yourself top of the class.

Because it really is the same situation, isn't it?

But, there is one important thing to note. Moses led the Israelites across the Red Sea to flee the oppressive Egyptians, and to begin their journey across the desert, which would last for 40 years, and where the Israelites would rediscover their God, and who they were meant to be.

And here, with our reading tonight, we have Joshua, so the prophet who succeeded Moses as the leader of the Israelites, leading them through the Jordan. Because, what we have here in our reading, is the Israelites arriving into the promised land.

This journey to the promised land began with Moses and the Israelites going through the Red Sea, and this journey ends with Joshua and the Israelites going through the Jordan.

And I think there's two ways we can look at this.

Firstly, we can see it as an **'oh... God did the same thing twice. huh. not sure how special it feels knowing that that's happened before and it's happening again'**.

Or, we can see it as **'it's happened again! the miracle has happened AGAIN! I can't believe it happened once, let alone twice!'**

I'll leave it to you to guess which way I would encourage you all to look at this.

Because, and here's a theological question to throw at you all tonight... if a miracle happens more than once, is it any less of a miracle? should we see something as anything less than a miracle, just because we see it over and over?

Can I point you to that altar for a second ...

Is the harvest any less of a miracle, just because it happens every year? I think we get so used to the idea that creation will feed us, that perhaps we should be fed, that we forget the absolute wonder that is nature.

The idea that almost everything there started from a tiny seed, which then became a tree which then, completely unasked by anyone, creates a staggering abundance, or became a plant which gives us what we need to thrive.

I think because we are so used to food, we're so used to harvest, we're so used to seeing this miracle over and over we forget how incredible the whole thing is.

And I don't want to stop at just there. Think of all the things we are so used to - clean water whenever we want it - electricity - access to medication people a hundred years ago could only dream of.

All these miracles happen, day in, day out, and because they happen so much it's so easy to think 'well it's just what we have'.

So, while none of us might see the Red Sea or the Jordan stopped by God and crossed by the Israelites, **we do see miracles each and every day**. So let's give thanks, and let's move ourselves to share this outpouring of God's love with others.

Amen.