

St.Cathrine's Anglican Church Stuttgart.

Trinity Sunday. Mathew 28:16-20, The great commission. Sermon by Solomon Benjamin

At the outset my thanks to Rev.Kara Werner our Chaplin for asking me to do this homily.

Trinity Sunday is the only Sunday when a doctrine is celebrated.

In this text the risen Christ appears to his disciples on a mountain where Jesus told them to come in Galilee and announces to them about his departure to his father.

Jesus addressed the last time directly to the disciples, it is his farewell speech and training to his disciples. Jesus touches a very sensitive issue. Jesus told them, he is soon going to his father

Jesus spoke to them about their mission after his departure. He urged the disciples to give-up selfish nature and become like him to have a heart and mind for people and again proving to them that he is God of all people. All cultures and contexts.

Often the disciple said, Jesus is mine, I am the disciple and others are not, don't we say, I am a Christian and others are not.

Jesus signalled to them to be like him to walk the talk and to invest in working for the kingdom and reign of God.

Permit me to share 3 thing expressed in this passage.

1. Authority of the father
2. Anointment of the son
3. Assurance of Holy Spirit the comforter. – A Trinitarian God, 'God of the trinity and God head family.

Let me explain.

1. Authority of the father.

When they saw Jesus they worshiped him and some doubted. This is interesting because this is the time after resurrection that Jesus uses Mary to communicate the message of resurrection and God's plan. Mary informed to disciples that Jesus wanted them to be at Galilee at that particular spot. Now their doubt is also on the information received from Mary.

But Jesus comes to them and he makes the first move towards them. He came closer for he was also emotional that he has to leave them, a choice deliberately made by him

Affirming it's Jesus, he eased the disciples and cleared their doubt.

Jesus demonstrates to them that it is not about who is right but what is right, to be like him to teach and touch people. He taught them not to put aside those they are bad, they are gentile or non-Jews, but to be like Jesus to reach to all.

Here he said... All authority in heaven and earth are given to him... Jesus affirms to them, this authority is given to him by the father, who is the source of the authority. Jesus

demonstrated that this authority is given to him to win, redeem, transform and liberate people to a new kingdom or a community based on love, peace, joy, equality and rights.

His kingdom Jesus preached is not gained by war, battle or fights but against, selfishness, hatred, anger, discrimination and human made divisions. Here Jesus reflects on Nazareth manifesto where it read “the spirit of the lord is upon me and he authorised me to open the eyes of the blind, deaf heat and set free those in bondage and to claim good news to the poor.”

Jesus reminded the disciples and also the world wide church, that authority is not to rule or exercise power but to serve, as recorded he came to serve and not to be served.

Jesus made the disciples realise that their mission begins in Galilee. Why Galilee of all the places? Galilee is recorded to be a place to almost sin, place where poor lived, fisher people were majority, murderers’ killers, material business and is also a place of prostitution. And metaphorically the mission began in Galilee.

2. Anointment of the Father.

Jesus said, therefore go and make disciples of all nations.

The disciples would have responded, oh no not again, why go? Let us wait for them to come to us. And why all nations, we are going there, let’s be here, this is secure zone for us. Doing his mission Jesus wanted them to come out of their comfort zone to be with the people.

This is about conversation to make disciples of all nations. But Jesus expression is to break away with mind-set of the people. We often like the disciples hold to what Martin Boober says, ‘I and Thou’ attitude or you and me attitude, it is seperationalism

Conversion is not only of the change in religion or faith, but is an enlighten of better understanding of self and context, where our humanity could facilitate to accelerate life for justice and development.

Dr.Russel Chandran a renowned theologian refers to conversation in his little booklet titles, Religious invitation he says that Christians, should engage in conversation . He said that conventions is not only about converting people of other faith into Christian faith but it is also converting the Christians as Human beings.

When Jesus spoke about discipline the nation, I doubt if he spoke about Christendom to increase the number to the church, but a movement that will journey with God for the mission of creating a new community of love, peace and equality.

Discipiing is to invite those who are outside the tent, broken hurt, victimised, discriminated to come into the tent of fellowship with efforts of healing, acceptance narrated as extensions of the kingdom of God reign. This makes the church as a church of the neighbourhood, where the church lives in the heart of the community and the issues and a challenges of the community becomes the agenda of the church both integrated in pilgrimage of solidarity in breaking bread and sharing.

Jesus here introduces Trinity, saying, go and make disciples and baptise them in the name of the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit, what that means. In this view we recognise that we are

not discipling for God, but God is moving forward in a world that deeply loved by sending his Son. This is also a missional invitation of God, that we participate in God's witnessing to the very character of God- A life style Mission

This is new anointment of God, bestows on the church soon after the Pentecost.

By this expression of discipling and baptising Jesus wanted probably to extend the discipleship and human community of love, respect and inclusive community, kingdom of peace, love joy and equality. This is the new anointment.

3.Assurance of the Holy spirit.

Jesus said, I am with you always to the very end of the ages. Jesus affirms the comforter of the Holy Spirit to be with the disciples for the task of inviting a community of inclusive believing movement.

Karl Barth expresses his theology, as a radical placing this mission under the umbrella of Trinitarian theology. This brings to focus what God is expecting at world to happen, this is referred as Missio-Deo

But sending disciples with assurance of Holy Spirit, Jesus sets a participatory process for disciples to engage with the world, with all communities and cultures for the purpose of enabling a new community and new ecclesia to focus, as Dr.Thoimas Thangaraj calls it Missio-habitat, a point where God and people he loved meet.

The assurance of the Holy Spirit the comforter is to affirm, when storm blows when we are alone we are often blown away, but when we stand in solidarity with one another as a community we are stronger to face the storm and challenges. This is the new ecclesia and a community living in sharing caring and serving one another.

Jesus said this to the disciples to go and build a community of solidarity by making disciples of all nations that you will be strong to influence each other and infect people with love, care, compassion with a disciple life-style just like Jesus.

The great commission is to build a community which lives in solidarity with one another bearing witness to the resurrected Christ.

The authority of the father- an ecclesia called into a new vision

The Anointment of the son- a baptism of a sharing and caring community

The assurance of the Holy spirit- a life style faith and a life-style church-

Amen.

Solomon Benjamin