

St Peter's, Ealing  
Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> January 2019  
Epiphany 3 YrC

Giving in Grace

(Isa 62.1-5; Ps 36.5-10; 1 Cor 12.1-11; John 2.1-11)

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I'm afraid this Sunday can't possibly pass without a reference to the 'B' word; Brexit. What a week we have been through; I suspect this is just the beginning. Although the temptation may be to bury our heads, something this momentous cannot pass us by and we should grapple with what our theological response needs to be. As Christians, constantly called to be a witness of God's love in the world, that witness is needed even more now as we struggle to make sense of what the future of this nation is to be. It doesn't matter whether you're a remainer, a brexitier, a Norway++ advocate, a crash out devotee. We, as a people of faith must try and find a way forward that witnesses to God's love in this world.

Though there are those who might point at us and suggest we get our own house in order first. This week is the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, a call to unite a body divided by prejudice, history, tradition and the like. This week cannot help but highlight the divisions within the Church of God. Yet even here there is a need for the people of faith to make sense of division and to work for unity if we are to be truthful to the calling upon our lives, made by Jesus, to be one, to love one another as Jesus loves us.

It might be suggested surely these divisions and dissent are rooted in our broken humanity. We are imperfect and as imperfect beings we fall into argument and division. Some would argue this is the rightful outcome of freedom of choice and dialogue. To have your own opinion is to not necessarily agree with your counterpart. This is indeed true. The question for us is what does God want of us? To be involved in ecclesiastical or secular politics is not to be counter to the will and wishes of God. What is counter to the divine will and wish is when we put ourselves first and when we cease to listen to God's word.

You may ask, what then does God ask of us? How can we know God's will? The answer begins to become clearer as we look to Good Friday and Easter Day.

The broken bread of the holy eucharist, instituted on Maundy Thursday is one that brings us into fellowship with each other here as well as others who not in this place. The broken bread of Christ's body takes us together to the foot of the cross where we see clearly the cost of humanity to God. Our sins have taken God himself in his son to the tree of shame. The cup we share is that of God's own blood in humanity poured out for us. Here is where we begin to understand or at least to look for the word of God for the world. If we are still unclear then we look to the actions of Jesus and for us today from our Gospel reading it is the first of Jesus' miracles, the changing of water into wine at the wedding in Canaan.

A seemingly innocuous and common place event, a wedding celebration. Yet this is a parable in itself of the grace of God in the world. The large stone jars are filled with water and as Jesus reveals his power over creation, so the water becomes wine. The jars held water for purification. The wine becomes the grace of God that is poured out in abundance for the world.

Through Jesus this grace overflows and in abundance. We are able to share this grace with others, just as they shared the wine at the wedding feast; and it is at a feast, a time of celebration, as God wants us to celebrate the gift of his son in our lives and the world we live in; to make this real and exciting for our neighbours, our friends, our family; in a way that encourages positive dialogue and collaboration to make a better stronger world through which the love of God shines.

If we are in any doubt today, our role is to share the grace of God as the stewards shared the wine at the wedding feast, with generosity and joy, that our world may be changed and the power of God made real among us all. As we face Brexit or no Brexit; as our churches come together to worship and give praise to God, celebrating our many forms, we should lead the way with the grace of God upon our hearts and the love of God as our light in bringing healing and wholeness where ever we can. That through our actions and witness others will know God is with us all.