

## THE FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY; PBS EUCHARIST.

St Paul teaches that the creature was made subject to vanity. Now Vanity is one of those root sins that plague humanity alongside Pride and Sensuality. Very briefly, Pride happens when we put ourselves first before God, Sensuality is when we put other things first and Vanity is when we put the esteem of others first. Vanity is that state of being that makes us self centred, that looks to have the ego stroked and the need to be constantly patted on the back. Vanity separates itself from what is considered common place and will fight against anything that makes it look weaker or lower. The Vain personality shrinks from the spiritual life, prefers the darkness of self centeredness rather than the light of self revelation with its opportunity to transform and will often be judgemental and unforgiving because that will show weakness of character.

On this last point Jesus offers some of His most stern warnings. We are told through parables, through teachings, through prayer, through the example of our Lord that the only way to be safe in the knowledge of forgiveness for our multitude of sins, is to ensure that we do not play god and judge others and certainly not think that we can withhold forgiveness from others when we have accrued quite a list of sins with God ourselves that require His forgiveness. When we lose sight of our own sins before God we are not very likely to be forgiving towards others.

The Desert Fathers tell a story to make this point, "Once there was a meeting of monks at Scetis, and they discussed the case of a guilty brother but Pior said nothing. Afterwards he got up and went out, took a sack filled it with sand, and carried it on his shoulders. He put a little sand in a basket and carried it in front of him. The monks asked him "what are you doing?" He answered, "The sack with a lot of sand is my sins; they are many, so i put them on my back and then i shall not weep for them. The basket with a little sand is the sins of our brother and they are in front of me, and i see them and judge them. This is not right. I ought to have my own sins in front of me, and think about them, and ask God to forgive me." When the monks heard this they said "this is the true way of salvation."

It is the true way of Salvation because it is the way of Jesus, and because it is the way of Jesus it must be our way without question. "Be ye merciful, as your

Father is merciful,” says Jesus. We can only be walking, talking, acting models of Jesus if we put ourselves in His hands and make it our calling to be perfect, perfect in love and joy and forgiveness. Jesus had every right by our standards to judge and to withhold forgiveness from those who treated him so cruelly, however while hanging on the cross, he did not condemn his executioners, he did not say he was innocent for that would have required man to be the judge of God and he did not curse those who cursed Him; what He did was to Forgive, “Forgive them for they know not what they do.” We can only do this when we are determined to become new people in Christ, transformed from the vain, sensual, pride prone people we are into the likeness and image of Him who willingly died so that the day of forgiveness could dawn.

AMEN.