

## HARVEST THANKSGIVING 1 OCTOBER 2017 (TRINITY 16 WEEK 26 YEAR A)

OT Reading Deut. 28.1-14

Setting is Moses talking to the Israelites just before they enter the land God had promised them. Lots of things had happened to them on their 40 year journey from Egypt, including God giving them the 10 commandments. Moses tells them that if they keep the commandments – that is, do what God wants them to do – then God will bless them:

lots of children

lots of crops

lots of sheep, cows, goats etc

victory over their enemies

This will impress other nations, who will see that the LORD has chosen the Israelites to be his holy people.

NT Reading 2 Cor. 9.6-15

But we know that life is not as straightforward as the 1<sup>st</sup> reading suggested. Even if people do what is right they can suffer misfortune. It may not rain for a year or more, so their crops do not grow. S. Paul wrote to the church in Corinth. He was spreading the gospel – telling people about Jesus – round the Mediterranean world, in countries like Turkey and Greece. At that time there was a famine in Israel, and the Christians around Jerusalem were suffering great hardship. Paul was collecting money from the churches to take to Jerusalem. He says that giving is like sowing seed. If you sow little, you'll reap little – get a very poor harvest. For a good harvest you have to sow plenty of seed. If you give generously God will bless you and enrich you in every way. There will be a great spirit of thanksgiving in the church. Paul knows people may be reluctant to give – he talks about 'the testing of this ministry' – but generous giving glorifies God, and that's what we should all be doing. It's following the example of Jesus. Giving is good for us.

Gospel Lk. 17.11-19

This describes Jesus healing ten lepers. One of them comes back to thank Jesus. It may not have a direct connection to 'harvest', but it's all about thanksgiving. Jesus says to that former leper, "Your

faith has made you well;” – literally, your faith has saved you. The act of giving thanks had a profound effect on his whole life, over and above being medically cured.

## Sermon

So what are we doing this morning? We’re singing some favourite harvest hymns. We’re bringing up some food items for people in need – they’ll go to our local YMCA. We’re worshipping God in a beautifully decorated church. But we can think more widely than that. We can think of being part of God’s creation. How should we relate to other people, to living things, and to the world in which we live? Today’s readings give us some wise guidance:

**BE HOLY** – and this includes using all things rightly, not wasting or harming them.

**BE GENEROUS** – not just because we see a need, but also because it draws us closer to God.

**BE THANKFUL** – for all the good things in our lives, and above all for the salvation we receive when we see that God is behind everything there is.

Be holy, be generous, be thankful.