



2nd Sunday after Trinity | Sermon – Revd Canon Stan Evans

***So if anyone is in Christ there is a new creation:
everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!***

Well, I am sure we have all heard the parable of the sower time and again, and preachers do their very best to bring a fresh understanding to what Jesus is trying to get over to his followers – and to us.

I sometimes think of God sowing seeds in the minds of many people, that eventually grow into full bloom.

In our Gospel reading Christ tells two parables:

the first on how the seed that is scattered on the ground sprouts, grows and produces a great harvest; the second is the story of how the mustard seed, the smallest of all seeds, grows into the greatest of all shrubs.

It is an unfortunate fact of life that people who set out to be high achievers often regret that over a span of a career they never blossomed into great trees. Instead, they think that in the sight of other people they have remained small twigs or leaves on the tree, and that when they die, like a falling leaf, they will be forgotten and be of no further value to others...

Yet when death is at our doorstep, none of us is going to be worried about the obituary pages or whether we will be judged by our achievements.

So why does it bother us so much during our “mature years”?



The author Bronnie Ware has worked for many years as a nurse in palliative care, caring for patients in the last weeks of their lives. She has counselled the dying in their last days and has tried to find out what are the most common regrets we have at the end of our lives. Her findings are very revealing.

In her best selling book entitled: '*The Top Five regrets of the Dying*', which has been read by over a million people worldwide and translated into 29 languages, she lists the top five regrets we have when we are dying:

1. I wish I had the courage to live a true life true to myself, not the life others expected of me.
2. I wish I hadn't worked so hard.
3. I wish I'd had the courage to express my feelings.
4. I wish I had stayed in touch with my friends.
5. I wish I had let myself be happier.

What is your greatest regret in life?

And what will you set out to achieve or change before you die?

Are you all seeds almost facing the harvest and therefore lost the urge to keep growing??? Why not adopt a tiny bit of mustard seed power in your twilight years?

The Revd Stan Evans

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ANGLICAN PARISH
ST. LAURENCE IN LANZAROTE

Our intrinsic, individual value does not depend on how useful we were to the projects of others. It is seen, instead, when we spend time with those we love and those who love us, when we were in touch with our feelings, when we valued our friendships, when we were happy rather than ambitious.

We are truly blessed when we come to the point of realising that love is more important than ambition, when we know friendships are more important than careers, when we know we are blessed by others not because of what they do, but simply because they are.

And when we love, when we can cry together, then we can laugh together, too.

John Betjeman was a press attaché in Dublin during World War II. He was immensely popular during his time in Dublin, learning the Irish Language, socialising in pubs, and becoming friends with many of Dublin's journalists and literary figures. When his official stay in Dublin came to an end in 1943, his departure made one of those great stories on the front page of the Irish Times. In one of his less well-known poems, *'The Last Laugh'*, Betjeman wrote:

I made hay while the sun shone.

My work sold.

Now, if the harvest is over,

And the world cold,

Give me the bonus of laughter

As I lose hold.

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When we recall friends and family members who have lost their hold on life, do we allow ourselves to put aside their regrets and our regrets in life?

Among the top from men in particular, is 'I wish I hadn't worked so hard.'

Is it really the hard work they regret or the long hours that kept them behind their desks instead of around the dinner table with their families? Is it really?

Despite what the poet laureate Sir John Betjeman once said about end-of-life regrets, there was no mention of more sex – there was no mention whatsoever of media profiles or better job titles and rising up the career ladder for the power of it all but the bonus of laughter.

As part of the great tree of life, whether they were tiny twigs, small leaves, little branches or great trunks, we can remember those who went before us with the bonus of laughter and with the bonus of love. For without them, we would not be who we are today.

As St Paul reminds us:

The love of Christ urges us on, because we are convinced that one has died for all; And he died for all, so that those who live might no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and was raised for them.

Remember the two parables: the first on how the seed that is scattered on the ground sprouts, grows and produces a great harvest; the second is the story of how the mustard seed, the smallest of all seeds, grows into the greatest of all shrubs.

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No matter how old we are, no matter what our life story has been thus far... we are all His seeds in the ground – and until we die, we never stop growing. And through him, anything is possible. We are small and weak instruments but through us God can do, and is doing great things.

So if you have given your life to Christ, there is a new creation every morning of our lives – and we can do better each day, make wiser decisions and in the end, regret less, for everything old has passed away; see everything has become new.

In the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

AMEN.