

WHAT IS THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN LIKE?

How wonderful for the early Jewish Christians hearing Matthew's Gospel.

Jesus says:

"Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets; I have come not to abolish but to fulfil." Matthew 5:17

Jesus goes on to say

"... not one stroke of a letter, will pass from the law until all is accomplished."
Matthew 5:18

Now we ponder the mission of Jesus *"to fulfil"* and *"until all is accomplished"*.

We think of Jesus as he **prays, loves, invites,**

Calls people to follow, **quotes** from the scripture,

Enlightens the disciples, **teaches, challenges, heals,**

Looks deep within people, **enjoys** hospitality,

Preaches, proclaims the kingdom of heaven,

Summarises the two greatest commandments,

Listens to people, is **moved with compassion,**

Lives humbly, acts humbly,

Travels around Galilee and up to Jerusalem as he **fulfils** the prophecies,

Explains with parables, **shows mercy,**

Announces the Good News, **offers** himself at Eucharist,

Suffers, dies, rises from the dead, **commissions,**

And **saves**.

And we can add more verbs to his ministry.

Sometimes in the English language, we don't have a single word to translate another word in Biblical Greek, including some verbs. Hence above, you find two or more words in dark type to translate a verb from Biblical Greek.

The mission to fulfil and to accomplish involves us too.

Our faith **is** active. We **live** our faith.

BUT WHERE ARE WE IN THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN?

If we are about privilege, status, self-praise, domination over others, loading burdens on others, we are in for a surprise.

Jesus says:

"For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven." Matthew 5:20

Already we see the call to be humble as disciples.

Over this year, as we read the whole of the Gospel of Matthew, we shall appreciate in a prayerful and active way what "the Kingdom of Heaven" and "righteousness" mean.

Already in this chapter, we know that the Beatitudes point the way.

Next weekend we shall ponder what it means to love your enemy, as part of righteousness and the Kingdom of Heaven.

[Fr. Gerry Hefferan – The Kingdom of Heaven and Mission – 12 February 2017]

[Readings: <http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/021217.cfm>]

[Parish Face book: <http://bit.ly/parishFacebook12022017>]