

15th June 08, Ely Cathedral, 10.30am

Matthew 9:35-10:8, 'The kingdom of heaven has come near'

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Prayer

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If, after service, you go out through the S Door into car park, and you look back at the Cathedral, on outside wall of S

Transept, you will see a sundial. If you are clever & if it's a sunny day - you can tell the time. Though beware - it's reading GMT not BST!

On sundial - there are 2 words. The words are in Greek - which is the language of the New Testament part of the Bible.

The words say: **Kairon Gnowthi**

Which, roughly translated, means: 'know the time'.

However, it *doesn't* mean - 'have a look at your watch to find out what time it is.'

If that is what they had wanted it to mean they would have used a different Greek word for time - **Chronos** - which is where we get our word Chronometer. But they didn't use Chronos. They used Kairos.

And Kairos means something like: a *special* moment; an opportune moment; God's appointed time. So, **Kairon Gnowthi** means something like, 'Understand the importance of *this moment in time* - because it is very special.'

Kairos is a word that is used a lot in the New Testament. So for example, at the beginning of St Mark's gospel, Jesus says: 'the time, *kairos*, is fulfilled; the kingdom of God has come near; turn away from your sins and believe the Good News.'

And what did people do when they had turned away from their sins and believed the Good News about Jesus? They were, of course, *baptised*.

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Well, today is a very special 'moment-in-time' for Jessica Rose Lloyd. Her parents and Godparents will, in a few minutes, make their decision to turn away from all that is wrong, to renounce evil & to turn to Christ. And they will declare their belief in the Good News of Jesus. And then, at around 11.20am on 15th June 2008, Jessica will be baptised, and become part of God's family. That will be the time on the clock, more or less.

But it will also be a *Kairos* moment. a special, eternal moment, when Jessica enters into God's Kingdom.

In today's Gospel reading, Jesus sends out the 12 disciples to go and proclaim the Good News to people in the neighbouring towns and villages. And he tells them to say: 'The Kingdom of heaven *has* come near to you.' This is a special '*Kairos moment*' for the people the disciples speak to. They have the chance to understand, to recognise, who Jesus is, to grasp the opportunity & to enter into God's Kingdom. Or, on the other hand, they can let it pass, not bother, leave it for another day, and so miss that *wonderful opportunity* to respond to Christ's invitation of love & grace, and to enter into the K of Heaven. This morning, in this place where people have prayed and worshipped for many centuries, right here under the Octagon, Jessica will be baptised. The Octagon reminds us of Jesus' words: 'the Kingdom of Heaven *has* come near to you.' It is designed to make us look up, to be aware of being surrounded by saints & angels; of being in the presence of the Risen Christ; to remind us that we are surrounded by the Kingdom of Heaven. //In a few minutes Jessica's parents and godparents will respond to the Good News of Christ by making promises and declaring their belief.

And when David has baptised her, we will then all welcome Jessica into God's family, into God's Kingdom.

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Think of those words on the Sundial. 'Know the time.' Know that the time has come. The prophet Isaiah says: 'seek the Lord while he may be found. Call upon him while he is near.' Words which call us to recognise & seize God's *Kairos moment of opportunity*. Words which tell us that, right now, God's Kingdom is very near. Near to each one of us. Only a hair's breadth away.

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So, do not let God's *kairos moment* pass you by this morning. This is *God's* opportune time, not just for Jessica but for all of us. *Seize* that opportunity! As we go through the words of the baptism, *make* those promises your own, so that you do not just come close to the Kingdom of Heaven for an instant, & then go away as if nothing had happened. But instead, say '*yes*' to the chance God offers you. *Walk through* the door he opens up for you. And enter the Kingdom of Heaven, not just for an instant in Ely Cathedral this morning, but for all eternity.///

In the name of God, Father, Son & Holy Spirit. Amen.