

The Old Testament reading is a not very interesting episode towards the end of King David's life.

God has promised David that his son Solomon shall succeed him and God will prosper his reign.

David is now very old, and cold, and on his deathbed perhaps.

His eldest surviving son, Adonijah, not one of Bathsheba's children (David's favourite wife!) is keen to have the throne, in place of Solomon. He arranges a coronation and doesn't invite the court prophet, the principal priest, or the court guard. And of course he doesn't tell David or Bathsheba.

When the news gets out David, Bathsheba, and Nathan the prophet get together and sort it and Solomon is proclaimed as the next King.

There is a hint in verse 6 as to why there is this trouble.

(His father had never interfered with him by asking "Why do you behave as you do?")

It seems David was not very disciplined about bringing up his sons. And now he reaps his reward!

David declares Solomon as King
Jesus sends out the Twelve

Second Sunday
before Advent

1 Kings 1. 15 - 40
Luke 9. 1 - 6

But more important is this glimpse
of God's plans being thwarted, then working out.

Often God's chosen one
is not the natural choice.

Often in the history of Abraham's descendants
we see, for example, brothers being taken out of order.

God concerns himself with our history;
God makes his own choices;
and God changes what is to be.
That is comforting! If you trust God.

Of course, we also see man interfering.
God has made his will known
and David is planning to implement it.
But Adonijah has other plans
and for a while he gets his own way.

But another comfort - eventually, sooner or later
God will have **his** way.
This time it was sooner.

We can thwart God's plans
but not forever!

Maybe it's best to go with God in the first place.
Eventually, Adonijah came to a sticky end
at Solomon's hands.

So we have a glimpse into the working out of God's plans
an insight into the working of God's Kingdom.

I'm not sure how this all fits in with our New Testament reading except it is on the theme of God's Kingdom and we are in this season, the weeks before Advent when we focus on God's Kingdom and particularly Christ the King.

Part of God's plan for the emergence of Christ's Kingdom was that succession from David to Solomon and God's promise that in Solomon he would establish David's House forever.

This was to be fulfilled, eventually through the Messianic Son of David, in the establishing of Christ's kingship at Calvary, Easter, and the Ascension.

And so when we see Jesus and his kingdom being established bit by bit in his ministry we are seeing the same story just a lot further down the line.

And that's where we are in Luke 9. Jesus is entering a new phase in his ministry. He has been collecting together his Twelve and now he sends them out with power and authority to do all that he himself has been doing. Drive out all Demons, cure diseases, and preach the Kingdom, and heal the sick.

Now there is a good agenda for a church!

This is now Jesus' third tour of Galilee and we can see a progression.

In Luke 4.44 Jesus tours the synagogues of Judea. He does this with the four fishermen.

In Luke 8. 1-2 he goes from one town and village to another, himself proclaiming the good news of the Kingdom of God, and he goes with the whole Twelve.

Now the third tour, 9. 1 - 6 he sends the Twelve out alone.

He has demonstrated, trained, and now commissioned them to do his work.

And on this trip (not necessarily a pattern for every mission!) he makes some conditions.

***Take nothing for the journey –
no staff, no bag, no bread, no money,
no extra tunic.***

He tells them (and this is a good model) to focus their efforts where they are welcomed; and to shake the dust of their feet where they are not.

They go, they come back, and they report great success.

A full commission, but an empty bag. and it works.

To do all these great works
driving our demons first on the list
required a dependence on God.

To travel without provisions
required a dependence on other people.

Both were important. Are important.
We can get too holy sometimes
and turn down the lifeboat and the helicopter
when this is what God has sent!

And sometimes God uses the oddest of people
to deliver what we need.
Like Solomon and Adonijah
God's choice isn't always the obvious one.

But what they found to be true
and you don't find this until you depend on it,
is that -

**God's work, done in God's way,
never lacks supply**

Sometimes we try to help God too much
and so his work gets done, not in his way.
And we struggle.

This is a hard one,
and it means sometimes letting things go
because God is not providing, God is not blessing.

It is like shaking the dust off your feet,
when you feel a real burden for a project,
but that work is not welcomed.

The wise thing, is to accept God's verdict.

I am disappointed, for example,
that we are not running regular Alpha courses
and adding lots of people to the church. We tried.
But is clearly not what God was blessing.

We need to find other ways to add to the church
and maybe other things need putting in place first?

When God closes a door
we have to look for the other open doors
and not just sit back.
That may be true in our lives too.
Sometimes God appears to block something
and we have to look to see
where he is opening up an opportunity.

I have known Christians go through many years of dryness
because God closed an avenue of opportunity
and they stopped, disappointed, and didn't look further.

We know what God wants of us, generally,
but if we want God's anointing on our work
and on our lives, and on our church,
we have to seek actively to know
both God's work and God's way.

And God will have his way - sooner or later.
Sooner is better. And now is best.
So never stop looking for God's approval,
and have the courage and faith to go with it.