

Thought for the day - Friday 12th June 2020

Times have changed, in lots of different ways, some good and some bad I think we would all agree. Who would ever have thought that I would be shopping online for dried yeast because home baking has become so popular that flour and yeast have become treasure to be hunted down and chased when the word gets round that a certain shop has had a delivery. And can anyone tell me where I can buy glacé cherries for my favourite fruit cake recipe?

A long time ago, before I went back to work after having my children I used to make chelsea buns for a tea-time treat. Sadly after becoming a working mum time for such luxuries went by the board and we were reduced to shop bought buns. But having taken receipt of my tin of yeast in the post - enough for 17 loaves it tells me - I decided to resurrect my Be-ro recipe book which is probably at least 35 years old and rather worse for wear, find the page and set about baking. I confess that I have a mixer with a dough hook so I can't claim to have spent hours kneading the dough but even so the whole process was exciting.

First step, reconstitute the dried yeast with sugar and a mix of warm water and milk. Watching the jug as the bubbly topping starts to appear is fascinating, it's a living entity, like a mini volcano. Then after the dough has been kneaded, covered and left in a warm place for a time there is the anticipation of finding it has doubled in size and feels springy. After the dough has been shaped into the buns it's left again and the magic happens for a second and final time before baking, glazing to make them shiny and the finished product which looks like this:



From tiny grains of yeast this is the end product - amazing!

Jesus likens the Kingdom of Heaven to yeast in Matthew 13:33:

Jesus told them another parable: 'The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed in with three measures of flour until all of it was leavened.'

This is a meditation by Nick Fawcett entitled "The Yeast"

"Meditation of one of the crowd following Jesus"

Kingdom?

What kingdom? - that's what I wanted to know.

There was no sign of anything happening that I could see -
no kingdom among us other than the one we knew about already,
the one we all lived in and despaired of.

He was trying to change it, true -

challenging the status quo,

offering a perspective on life few of us had even considered before -

and, yes, if the world could be as he painted it,

ruled by love, not hatred,

trust, not fear,

perhaps then it might make sense to speak of heaven here on earth;

but realistically I couldn't see that happening,

and I couldn't help but ask of Jesus:

What was he trying to prove?

I hated to spoil the party -

it was the last thing I wanted to do -

only it had to be said,

for though dreams have their place,

it's whether they become reality that matters,

isn't it? -

and I simply couldn't see any way that was possible.

No, I'd not forgotten his followers,

those disciples of his who he seemed to place such faith in;

nor the crowds either, come to that,

for there were always plenty of those,

a great throng hanging on his every word,

watching his every move.

But even if they were all to pull together,

all work in unison towards the same goal,

what difference could they possibly make to the way things were?

Not a scrap!

Or, at least, that's what I thought,
until, through that one breathtakingly simple parable,
he put a stop to all my questions.

Where was the kingdom?

When would it come?

The answer was staring me in the face if only I had eyes to see it,
for it was right there, through his ministry -

the words he spoke,

the love he shared,

the life he lived -

and not only that, but here too,

in you and me,

and everyone willing to commit their lives to his cause

and work to bring his kingdom closer.

It may not seem much,

a word here,

a deed there,

a small act of kindness,

a simple expression of love,

but little by little each takes effect,

now here,

now there,

attitudes being changed,

hearts stirred,

imaginations fired,

lives transformed.

You may not see any sign of it,

you may even believe nothing is happening,

but it's there all the same,

each day, each moment, a little more of heaven breaking through -

not simply a future promise but a present reality -

God's kingdom here on earth,

here and now!

Prayer

Lord Jesus Christ,
we talk so often about the coming of your kingdom
that we can forget, in a very real sense, it has come already,
here all around us in a host of ways.
In numerous expressions of love and kindness
you are here,
working out your purpose,
serving and being served.
In countless lives being changed every day,
you are here,
calling,
cleansing,
renewing,
restoring.
In the prayers,
the work,
the worship of your people,
you are here,
bestowing and making known your love.
The fulfilment may be yet to come,
but the kingdom is here among us,
dawning a little more brightly day by day.
Help us to play our part in its growth,
to do what we can to make it more real on earth,
until that day when we dwell with you and all your people
in your eternal kingdom,
and yours is the power and glory for evermore,
Amen.

<https://youtu.be/3kVHKuldZyw>

Beauty for Brokenness - Graham Kendrick