

Luke 15:1-32

15 Now all the tax collectors and sinners were coming near to listen to him. ² And the Pharisees and the scribes were grumbling and saying, “This fellow welcomes sinners and eats with them.” ³ So he told them this parable: ⁴ “Which one of you, having a hundred sheep and losing one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness and go after the one that is lost until he finds it? ⁵ When he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders and rejoices. ⁶ And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and neighbors, saying to them, ‘Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep that was lost.’ ⁷ Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance. ⁸ “Or what woman having ten silver coins, if she loses one of them, does not light a lamp, sweep the house, and search carefully until she finds it? ⁹ When she has found it, she calls together her friends and neighbors, saying, ‘Rejoice with me, for I have found the coin that I had lost.’ ¹⁰ Just so, I tell you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.”

Sermon – September 11, 2022

Queen Elizabeth II on her 21st birthday in 1947 said this to the world:

"I declare before you all that my whole life, whether it be long or short, shall be devoted to your service"

Just this year, Queen Elizabeth added:

"When I was 21, I pledged my life to the service of our people and I asked for God's help to make good that vow. Although that vow was made in my salad days, when I was green in judgement, I do not regret, or retract, one word of it." Queen Elizabeth II 2022

Only three months ago in June, we celebrated Queen Elizabeth's Platinum Jubilee, 70 years reign...the longest reign of any British Monarch in history.

I am so glad we had our 'Jubilee Tea' in June! I am so glad we had the special balloons, the bunting, the flags. I am so glad we got out our fine china and linens. I am so glad we played the video of Her Majesty having tea with Paddington Bear. She really did act in it with humour and enthusiasm. Now we know it was a marmalade sandwich she carried in her purse!! Now we know it was our last celebration although we didn't realize it. among the millions of flower tributes there are numerous 'marmalade sandwiches' with notes saying 'for later'.

Amidst Jubilee celebrations we were reminded last June by the Archbishop of York that the coronation is a religious service.

The anointing is the most sacred part of the coronation ceremony, and takes place before the investiture and crowning out of view under a canopy. **The Archbishop pours holy oil from into a spoon, and anoints the sovereign on the hands, breast and head.**

As the previous stock of oil had been lost in an air raid, a new oil was made from a secret mixture of **sesame and olive oil**, containing ambergris, orange flowers, roses, jasmine, cinnamon, musk and benzoin— it must have smelled glorious. The anointing ritual is very old, going back to King Solomon being anointed by Zadok the high priest, in the 10th century BC.

I must admit that from time to time in recent years I wondered why the Queen didn't 'retire' and hand over to her son Prince Charles. But now I understand why she didn't. As she reiterated only this year, she had made a vow and at her coronation, a sacred vow. She pledged to serve her people for her entire life. And that by God's grace she did right up until the end.

Only 2 days before she died, Prime Minister Liz Truss and the former prime minister Boris Johnson said how bright the Queen had been when they had separate audiences with her at Balmoral. Truss said: "She generously shared with me her deep experience of government, even in those last days.". Johnson said: "in that audience, she was as radiant and as knowledgeable and as fascinated by politics as ever I can remember."

Just the day before she died, on Wednesday, Her Majesty sent a message of sympathy to the people of Saskatchewan after the terrible stabbings which had taken place there.

Faithful and active to the very end. No wonder it is difficult to really believe that she has passed over that great threshold.

A Service of Prayer and Reflection was held at St Paul's Cathedral on Friday. The service was led by the first woman to be Bishop of London, the Rt Revd and Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally. She spoke of the debt of

gratitude that was owed to the late Queen and how her Christian faith had shaped her reign of more than 70 years.

The Bishop noted: "Her Majesty had a remarkable Christian faith, about which she had increasingly spoken in recent years, referring to Jesus Christ as her anchor and role model. Here in this Cathedral Church on the 3rd of June, we joined to celebrate her Platinum Jubilee.

At that time "The Archbishop of York spoke of her faith in Jesus Christ as a fountain and a well from which she drew deeply, and by which she was replenished through all the challenges and joys of her life."

In a note of comfort for those grieving, the Queen insisted death is not the end.

"As a Christian I believe that death is not the end. That gives me hope even in the worst of times.

"To speak of hope is not to deny the fear, the loss and the anguish which death brings.

We as Christians can join the late Queen in that hope. Our Gospel today recounts Jesus' wonderful parables of the lost sheep and the lost coin. Their message is that God's faithfulness and love are infinite and everlasting. As our late Queen continued to the end, so Our Lord continues to both 'be there' and to actively pursue us on our lost days and in our lost moments to the end. Our Lord understands our weakness and will never give up on us. Now isn't that Good News!

The Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby, delivered *Thought for the Day on Friday*. He said: ...Her late Majesty showed us that, when we build our lives on God's faithfulness, we are on the solid ground of eternity that cannot be shaken. He goes on...

"In time of grief, fear, or vulnerability, we cling to the wounded feet of Christ; it is offered to all of us. We look out into the world, and can find

that our lives can be abundant as Her late Majesty's was; that our lives can find hope, even in the face of death.

Let us pray,
Gracious God, we give thanks
for the life of your servant Queen Elizabeth,
For her faith and her dedication to duty.
Bless us as we mourn her death
And may her example continue to inspire us;
Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.



The Bishop of London led tributes to the late Queen (Image: GETTY)