

**A Sermon for Chapter Day, 28 June 2022**  
**Given at St Davids Cathedral by the Dean, The Very Revd Dr Sarah Rowland Jones**

‘Am hynny,’ meddai Iesu wrthynt, ‘y mae pob ysgrifennydd a ddaeth yn ddisgybl yn nheyrnas nefoedd yn debyg i berchen ty sydd yn dwyn allan o'i drysorfa bethau newydd a hen.’

Jesus said to them, ‘Therefore every scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like the master of a household who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old.’

Mt 13:52

Lord Jesus Christ, eternal Word of God made flesh, take these words and speak through them, take our minds and speak to them, take our hearts, and set them on fire with your love.

This reflection practically writes itself: surely it is the essence of a Cathedral, above all other places of worship, to bring out both old and new from the Lord's treasure store.

As for the old, we are inheritors of tradition back to the 6<sup>th</sup> century. We stand on the shoulders of countless generations. In the various histories we have, our predecessors are often presented as giants among the people. So it is disconcerting to wonder if we will be viewed similarly by those in the future – are we not all just our ordinary selves? But this underlines how we now bear the same responsibility to ‘pass on that which we have received’ (cf 1 Cor 11:23) as faithfully as we can, to those who will come after. We do so by the grace of the one who makes all things new (cf Rev 21:5), conscious of the call to make known eternal truths in the languages and contexts of contemporary culture; drawing on the professional best of our times, from scholarship to technology. And in all this, we need to remain conscious of being clay in the potters hand, open to being constantly reworked, reshaped.

I've been casting my mind back over the last four years, to those earliest Chapters of 2018 and 2019, when we believed God was leading us to go forwards from a more introspective stance, and move towards a more expansive, outward looking and engaged way of life for the Cathedral. We reckoned it would take us about 5 years. But we never reckoned on Covid!

Looking back, I'm seeing something of what it meant to be clay, held safe while being remoulded in the potter's hands, as we attempted to continue moving forwards through those times, but in unimaginably different circumstances from what we'd anticipated. We managed to retain all staff through the pandemic, as furlough and grants kept us largely afloat. And I think we learnt new lessons about old and new: that sense of finding we could distinguish in new ways between the essence of tradition, to which we hold fast, and mere habit, to which we sit light. So, for example, as we emerge from the pandemic, we've been reviewing, refining, our liturgical and musical practice. Canon Leigh has driven this, and we now have a great sense of being sharper, more on the ball, blowing away cobwebs. Likewise, the prospect of having a Cathedral footprint – and such a remarkable, faith-declaring footprint – in the heart of the city, through the Friends' purchase of Belmont House, now Tŷ'r Eglwys Gadeiriol, with our own shop and café, is tremendously exciting. We didn't see that coming four years ago! In so many ways, we are glimpsing a coming future of much promise, even if we know that financially this will be the toughest year yet, as we work through what we need to do to come out on the other side.

Yet we don't know, and we cannot know, the detail, of how the future will unfold. So we must keep resting in the Potter's hands. He has given us a vision for an exciting future; and he knows how to get us there, even if the route may not be quite as we expect. So let us keep faithful as he leads us on each next step – as the Psalmist warned, not putting our trust in princes, in human capacity, in ourselves; but praising the Lord as long as we live.

As today's collect says: Merciful God, you have prepared for those who love you such good things as pass our understanding: pour into our hearts such love toward you that we, loving you in and above all things, may obtain your promises, which exceed all that we can desire; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord. Amen

## Readings of the Day

### Psalm 146

1 Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord, O my soul!  
2 I will praise the Lord as long as I live; I will sing praises to my God all my life long.  
3 Do not put your trust in princes, in mortals, in whom there is no help.  
4 When their breath departs, they return to the earth; in that very day their plans perish.  
5 Happy are those whose help is the God of Jacob, whose hope is in the Lord their God,  
6 who made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them; who keeps faith for ever;  
7 who executes justice for the oppressed; who gives food to the hungry. The Lord sets the prisoners free;  
8 the Lord opens the eyes of the blind. The Lord lifts up those who are bowed down;  
the Lord loves the righteous.  
9 The Lord watches over the strangers; he upholds the orphan and the widow, but the way of the wicked he brings to ruin.  
10 The Lord will reign for ever, your God, O Zion, for all generations. Praise the Lord!

### Jeremiah 18:1-6

Dyma'r gair a ddaeth at Jeremeia oddi wrth yr ARGLWYDD: "Cod a dos i lawr i dy'r crochenydd; yno y paraf i ti glywed fy ngeiriau." Euthum i lawr i dy'r crochenydd, a'i gael yn gweithio ar y droell. A difwynwyd yn llaw'r crochenydd y llestr pridd yr oedd yn ei lunio, a gwnaeth ef yr eildro yn llestr gwahanol, fel y gwelai'n dda. Yna daeth gair yr ARGLWYDD ataf, "Oni allaf fi eich trafod chwi, ty Israel, fel y mae'r crochenydd hwn yn ei wneud â'r clai?" medd yr ARGLWYDD. "Fel clai yn llaw'r crochenydd, felly yr ydych chi yn fy llaw i, ty Israel.

The word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord: 'Come, go down to the potter's house, and there I will let you hear my words.' So I went down to the potter's house, and there he was working at his wheel. The vessel he was making of clay was spoiled in the potter's hand, and he reworked it into another vessel, as seemed good to him.

Then the word of the Lord came to me: Can I not do with you, O house of Israel, just as this potter has done? says the Lord. Just like the clay in the potter's hand, so are you in my hand, O house of Israel.

### Matthew 13:47-53

'Eto y mae teyrnas nefoedd yn debyg i rwyd a fwriwyd i'r môr ac a ddaliodd bysgod o bob math. Pan oedd yn llawn, tynnodd dynion hi i'r lan ac eistedd i lawr a chasglu'r rhai da i lestri a thaflu'r rhai gwael i ffwrdd. Felly y bydd yn niwedd amser; bydd yr angylion yn mynd allan ac yn gwahanu'r drwg o blith y cyfiawn, ac yn eu taflu i'r ffwrnais danllyd; bydd yno wylo a rhincian dannedd. A ydych wedi deall yr holl bethau hyn?' Dywedasant wrtho, 'Ydym.' 'Am hynny,' meddai ef wrthynt, y mae pob ysgrifennydd a ddaeth yn ddisgybl yn nheyrnas nefoedd yn debyg i berchen ty sydd yn dwyn allan o'i drysorfa bethau newydd a hen.' Pan orffennodd Iesu'r damhegion hyn, aeth oddi yno.

Jesus said 'Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was thrown into the sea and caught fish of every kind; when it was full, they drew it ashore, sat down, and put the good into baskets but threw out the bad. So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come out and separate the evil from the righteous and throw them into the furnace of fire, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Have you understood all this?' They answered, 'Yes.' And he said to them, 'Therefore every scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like the master of a household who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old.' When Jesus had finished these parables, he left that place.