**“Whoever welcomes”** (Matthew 10.40 & 41)

Passage is about welcoming and naturally we think in terms of us welcoming others – eg those who come along to our services; we might pride our parish on being welcoming.

We should welcome God’s messengers including obvious ones like presbyters, visiting preachers, pastoral visitors, but also those outside our church. Does God speak to us in those who advocate Black Lives Matter? Or who call for adoption of the Living Wage? Or want us to be kind to those who brought Covid back to NZ?

**“Whoever welcomes a good man because he is good…”** (v41) there are plenty of good people outside of a church? They may be children, homosexuals, single parents, or speak a different language.

Are we prepared to give a cup of water to even the least of these?

How ready are you to perceive God in others, especially those quite different from you and yours?

But this passage is also (more importantly?) about how others welcome us! Or rather the Jesus active in us. NB the whole section begins at Matthew 10.5 with Jesus instructing the Twelve.

It is not easy to swallow pride and accept help or hospitality from others, especially spiritual help from those outside the church. How comfortable would you be if a Moslem prayed for you, or you were invited to a Jewish home for a Friday night Shabbat meal? Who ‘out there’ has given you a drink of cold water?

How can we be the least of Jesus’ followers?

[1] When God’s in us: **“God’s messenger, *because he is* God’s messenger”** & **“the least of these my followers”** How can we say we are his followers if we are not following? What does it mean to be a follower? Surely it is at least fulfilling God’s purpose for us individually and as a parish.

[2] When we are active in non-Christians’ lives. It is not enough to be ‘his followers’ if this does not include having some meaningful contact with those who are not his followers. Being active in others’ lives is about being neighbourly, acting for the good of society, joining non-church groups….

We are then vulnerable; embracing this helps us share our faith & receive from others.