

LIFEPATH 2025

AT BRINKBURN PRIORY

REFLECTION 3

Theme: The Generous King

Today I'm sat on the dunes here in Bamburgh with the castle in the background. Oswald ruled Northumbria from 634 until his death in battle at Oswestry in 642. Bamburgh was where St Oswald's court was based and where Oswald ruled from. He also had a summer palace too, known as Gefrin or Yeavinger, which was used by many of the Anglo Saxon kings and queens before and after Oswald. This was situated just north of Wooler on the side of the road to Kirknewton, there's a memorial there which gives a bit more information.

Today is my last reflection and so far we've thought about how Oswald was a faithful king, faithful to his people because of the way in which his personal faith and trust in God and Jesus impacted his own life. And we've seen the affect of Oswald's faith on his kingdom as he humbly acted as an interpreter for Aidan whilst Aidan shared the Good News of the Gospel and got to know the language of the people of Northumbria.

The Generous King

Today I want to share with you a story about Oswald's generosity. He was well known for his compassion and generosity which was seen through the care he offered to those folk who were poor in his kingdom. He took this so seriously that he had appointed one of his officials to look out for those who were in need. This is what Bede writes about Oswald's compassion and generosity:

To give one instance, it is told, that when he was once sitting at dinner, on the holy day of Easter, with the aforesaid bishop (Aidan), and a silver dish full of royal dainties was set before him, and they were just about to put forth their hands to bless the bread, the servant, whom he had appointed to relieve the needy, came in on a sudden, and told the king, that a great multitude of poor folk from all parts was sitting in the streets begging alms of the king; he immediately ordered the meat set before him to be carried to the poor, and the dish to be broken in pieces and divided among them. At which sight, the bishop who sat by him, greatly rejoicing at such an act of piety, clasped his right hand and said, "May this hand never perish."

Bede goes on and tells of how Aidan's prayer was answered as Oswald's right arm and hand remained intact after his death and was kept, according to tradition, as a relic. It was also the case that Oswald's kingdom didn't fade away after his death either, it outlived him and ushered in a time of stability. And his reign not only enabled the Gospel to be shared but opened the door for a Golden age of art and learning too. Perhaps, for a time, it was as if the Kingdom of God had come, an earthly reflection of God's own heavenly Kingdom.

In Matthew's Gospel chapter 14 verses 13 – 21 we read of the generosity of God:

14 When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them and healed their sick.

15 As evening approached, the disciples came to him and said, "This is a remote place, and it's already getting late. Send the crowds away, so they can go to the villages and buy themselves some food."

16 Jesus replied, "They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat."

17 "We have here only five loaves of bread and two fish," they answered.

18 "Bring them here to me," he said. 19 And he directed the people to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves. Then he gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the people. 20 They all ate and were satisfied, and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over. 21 The number of those who ate was about five thousand men, besides women and children.

Lets pray,

Lord Jesus, our compassionate and generous saviour, we thank you for the way in which you reveal our Father's nature to us. We praise you for the generosity with which He provides for us and meets the needs that we have. In our living and doing may we reflect your generosity to this world and to all those whom we will serve as part of the Lifepath

The Generous King

team. Through our words and actions may your compassion, love and generosity be seen.

We also pray, from your bounteous resource, that you will provide for the needs we and the whole lifepath team have. And we thank you that you are faithful and we can trust that you'll be with us each and every step of each and every day.

Amen.