



AT HOME SERVICE

Sunday 13th October 2024

compiled by Alison Morgan - Local Preacher

Our call to worship

Living God,

We come into your presence to feed upon your word,

To listen to your voice and know your risen power in this place and in our lives. Amen

Let us sing Hymn 673 StF

1] Will you come and follow me

If I but call your name?

Will you go where you don't know

And never be the same?

Will you let my love be shown,

Will you let my name be known,

Will you let my life be grown

In you and you in me?

2] Will you leave yourself behind

If I but call your name?

Will you care for cruel and kind

And never be the same?

Will you risk the hostile stare

Should your life attract or scare?

Will you let me answer prayer

In you and you in me.

3] Will you let the blinded see

if I but call you name?

Will you set the prisoners free

And never be the same?

Will you kiss the leper clean,

and do such as this unseen,

and admit to what I mean

In you and you in me?

John L. Bell (b. 1949)

Let us pray

To whom shall we lift our praises except to you, Creator God,
who filled this earth with such beauty for us to enjoy.

To whom shall we fit our praises except to you, Eternal God,
From the dawn of time we were part of your plan
And to the end of time we are held in your hand.

To whom shall we fit our praises except to you, Almighty God,
Who rans us freedom from the burden of sin
And, as shepherd, brings us safely home again.

Lord, your name is exalted, and we shall sing your praises.

Forgive us, Lord,

When our faith is too small to believe you can help us;

When we cry in the dark not expecting an answer.

Forgive us, Lord,
When the wise of the world try so hard to persuade us that you do not exist,
And we're tempted to listen.

Forgive us, Lord,
When the journey of faith is a hard path to follow
And no longer the joy it was when we first began.

Forgive us, Lord;
Rekindle the flame that once shone within these hearts, we pray.

In you, O God, is our waking and our resting.
In you, O God, is our healing and forgiving.
In you, O God, is our praying and receiving.
In you, O God, is our giving and our blessing.
Receive our thanks and praise. Amen

The Lord's Prayer

The reading for today is Mark Chapter 10 verses 17-31

The Rich Young Man

As Jesus started on his way, a man ran up to him and fell on his knees before him. "Good teacher," he asked, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?". "Why do you call me good?" Jesus answered. "No-one is good-except God alone. You know the commandments: 'Do not murder, do not commit adultery, do not steal, do not give false testimony, do not defraud, honour your father and mother.'" "Teacher," he declared, "all these I have kept since I was a boy." Jesus looked at him and loved him. "One thing you lack," he said. "Go, sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me". At this the man's face fell. He went away sad, because he had great wealth. Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, "How hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God!". The disciples were amazed at his words. But Jesus said again, "Children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God." The disciples were even more amazed, and said to each other, "Who then can be saved?" Jesus looked at them and said, "With man this is impossible, but not with God; all things are possible with God". Peter said to him, "We have left everything to follow you!" "I tell you the truth," Jesus replied, "no-one who has left home or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields for me and the gospel will fail to receive a hundred times as much in this present age, (homes, brothers, sisters, mothers, children and fields-and with them, persecutions) and in the age to come eternal life. But many who are first will be last, and the last first".

Reflection

This is possibly one of the most challenging stories in the whole of the Gospels. We all have different amounts of money and different relationships to money. Some of us may be struggling to make ends meet. Some of us may have a different relationship with money. My late husband really enjoyed making money, he worked hard to make that happen. But never liked spending money. But whatever our relationship with money is, is nothing new, because 2000 years ago Jesus had a lot to say about it.

This is the only story in the Gospels of Jesus directly inviting someone to follow him, and them refusing. And the reason he refused is that he can't let go of his possessions. He's not a bad man. He has kept all the commandments since he was a young man. Notice how Jesus misses out, 'You shall not covet', which is all

about being satisfied with what we have, rather than wanting more, or what everyone else has and wanting that too. Jesus seems to know that this is his weakness. Someone with many possessions probably isn't satisfied with what they have but sees what everyone else has and desires it, accumulating more and more. Jesus also adds a commandment - 'You shall not defraud.' Again, perhaps Jesus is seeing something about this man that he wants to draw attention to: could there be something unjust about his accumulation of wealth?

But what does this man really desire? Because he does want something he doesn't yet have. He asks Jesus for it: 'What must I do to inherit eternal life?'. Or as we would put it, 'How do I get to heaven when I die'. Having secured the resources of having a comfortable life on earth, he is now looking beyond that.

Theologian N.T. Wright suggests a different perspective. Eternal life isn't all about what happens when we die. It's tied up with the idea of 'thy kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven' - the possibility of a new era, right here, right now, a world saved and transformed by God, bringing freedom, justice and peace. Promised by God. He wants to be a part of that era, of that kingdom. Perhaps this man senses that his material wealth is not enough and will never satisfy.

Jesus loves him for that. This is the only place in Mark's Gospel where we're told that Jesus loves someone. Jesus loves him, and knows what he needs and tells him, 'You lack one thing; go, sell what you own and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. 'Wright suggests that this isn't so much about the treasure he can't have until he dies, but the treasure that he can enjoy in God's kingdom here on earth.

So, what about us? Do we fall into the same category as this man who had many possessions? Jesus' suggestion, 'go sell what you own and give the money to the poor', might leave us too feeling shocked. We would probably think, ooohh that's a little extreme. But we do love our possessions and our money so much - would we turn down an invitation to follow Jesus?

We don't all necessarily have to sell all we have and give the money to the poor (do I hear sighs of relief?). What we do need to do, is to be ready to give, to be generous when Jesus calls us to. Like so many things, generosity needs to be practised. Perhaps this man was terrified at the idea of giving away any of his wealth because he never had. Giving financially - to the church, to charities - is part of what it means to follow Jesus. Because that is what keeps us from being pulled down by the weight of our own possessions. But more than that, it's part of how we can work with God to bring about God's era of freedom, just and peace; how we can have treasure here and now, on earth as it is in heaven. Amen

Let us sing Hymn 78 StF

Give thanks with a grateful heart,
Give thanks to the Holy One;
Give thanks because he's given
Jes Christ, his Son.
Give thanks with a grateful heart,
Give thanks to the Holy One;
Give thanks because he's given
Jes Christ, his Son.

And now let the weak say, 'I am strong,'
Let the poor say, 'I am rich,'
Because of what the Lord has done for us;
And now let the weak say, 'I am strong,'
Let the poor say, 'I am rich,'
Because of what the Lord has done for us;
Give thanks.

Henry Smith (b. 1952)

Let us pray our prayers of Intercession

We pray for all who are fighting against evil
For goodness, truth and justice,
Both those who make the world news
And those whose battles are known only to God.
We pray for our country and its leaders,
That this nation may seek God.

We pray that wealth and comfort many not divert us
From searching out the heart of God;
That we may hear God's challenging
And gladly respond to him;
That our homes and communities
May sparkle with God's glory.

We pray for the disillusioned and depressed
And all who have lost their way in life;
We pray for those corrupted by evil,
Trained in hatred and twisted by bitterness.
We pray for the transforming of these lives.

We pray for those whose earthly life
Has come to an end,
And for those who mourn their going,
May the dead rest in the peace and joy of heaven
Through the mercy of God.

Your will be done:
On earth as in heaven.

With thankful hearts we recall the times
When God has rescued and forgiven us,
Leading us deeper into his friendship. Amen

Riches I heed not, nor earth's empty praise:
Be thou mine inheritance now and always;
Be thou and thou only the first in my heart:
O Sovereign of heaven, my treasure thou art.

And may the blessing of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit be with us now and for evermore. Amen