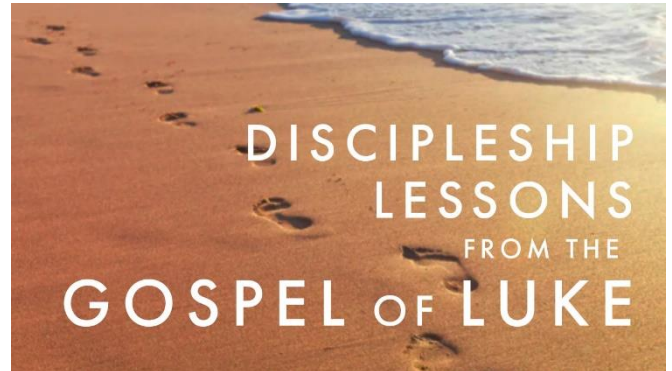




Highcliffe and Bransgore Methodist Churches

Sunday 17th January 2021 - Rev'd Phillip Dixon - "Confused Disciples" Luke 9: 37-50

These written worship sheets are for you to use as we gather in our homes to worship God. Welcome to the second Sunday of our six week preaching series, using Luke's gospel, to hear what Jesus wants to tell us today about being His disciples. I pray that we all gain fresh insight and understanding from the message Jesus provides us with. May His Holy Spirit be with each one of us in our homes guiding us to follow Him on the right path.



Opening words:

Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth.
Worship the Lord with gladness;
come before him with joyful songs.

Know that the Lord is God.
It is he who made us, and we are his;
we are his people, the sheep of his pasture.
Enter his gates with thanksgiving
and his courts with praise;
give thanks to him and praise his name.

For the Lord is good and his love endures for
ever;
his faithfulness continues through all generations.

Amen Psalm 100 1-5 NIV

Song: Be still for the presence of the Lord StF 20

Sing/read /pray/ proclaim the words.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AKfyudrhGK4&ab_channel=mkariobangi

Be still for the presence of the Lord
The Holy One is here
Come bow before Him now
With reverence and fear
In Him no sin is found
We stand on holy ground
Be still for the presence of the Lord
The Holy One is here.

Be still for the glory of the Lord
Is shining all around
He burns with holy fire
With splendour He is crowned
How awesome is the sight
Our radiant King of light
Be still for the glory of the Lord
Is shining all around.

Be still for the power of the Lord
Is moving in this place
He comes to cleanse and heal
To minister His grace
No work too hard for Him
In faith receive from Him
Be still for the power of the Lord
Is moving in this place. David J. Evans (b.1957)

Opening Prayer:

Loving Lord, we invite your Holy Spirit to be with us this in this time of worship in our homes, unite us Lord so that together we can all become faithful and committed disciples.

Together we represent the confused, the lost, the lonely, the sick, the broken-hearted and the bereaved. Lord God gently, yet firmly, teach us today, so that the gaps in our understanding may

be filled. May our prayers and our praise, our spoken and unspoken words of repentance, our longing and our thankfulness be true and faithful. We pray for Your Spirit to fill us today, to overflow into every part of our lives, remove doubt and fear and replace them with the hope that You provide us with.

Thank You Lord that we can approach Your throne of grace and love with certainty, with boldness, through Your Son and our Saviour Jesus, who is the Way, the Truth and the Life, the perfecter of our faith.

May this time of worship, increase our desire to live in ways which honour and glorify You.

This we pray in the name of our precious Saviour Jesus, **Amen.**

Prayer of Thanksgiving and Confession:

Lord, we praise You for Your goodness, Your power and Your glory.

We thank you for being so patient with us in our weakness and for understanding our confusion, our doubts and our fears.

We thank You for the ordinariness of Jesus' first disciples, but that being with Him changed their lives. We praise You that following Him made their lives extraordinary.

We thank you that we are told about the disciples' strengths and weaknesses, their faith and also their confusion and doubts.

We thank You for the questions they asked Jesus and His response to their concerns. We thank You for those who have helped us to know You as our Lord and Saviour. Those whose faithful words and deeds have made You real and relevant to us.

We are sorry for that our lives and our worship make it harder for others to trust You.

We are sorry that too often we still rely on our own strength.

Please help us to speak to others of Your love.

In a time of silence we bring our own failings, things that we ask forgiveness for, areas of our lives that we resolve, with Your help, to make right.

We bring these prayers in the name of our Lord, Jesus Christ. **Amen**

Prayer of Thanksgiving and Confession based on 500 Prayers for All Occasions by David Clowes

Our Lord's Prayer (family prayer):

Our Father in Heaven,
Hallowed be Your name.
Your Kingdom come,
Your will be done,
on earth as it is in Heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our sins,
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from the evil one.
For Yours is the Kingdom and the power
and the glory forever. **Amen.** Based on NKJV

Hymn: Will you come and follow me StF 673

Sing/read/pray/proclaim words.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zK6IUaIJ3sk&ab_channel=HymnChannel

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?

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?

Will You Love The 'You' You Hide
If I But Call Your Name?
Will You Quell The Fear Inside
And Never Be The Same?
Will You Use The Faith You've Found
To Reshape The World Around,
Through My Sight And Touch And Sound
In You And You In Me?

Lord, Your Summons Echoes True
When You But Call My Name.
Let Me Turn And Follow You
And Never Be The Same.
In Your Company I'll Go
Where Your Love And Footsteps Show.
Thus I'll Move And Live And Grow
In You And You In Me. John L. Bell (b.1949) and Graham Maule
(b.1958) excludes verse 3.

Prayer: Loving Lord God, as we read Your Holy Word and the accompanying notes, we pray today that our hearts and minds will be fully open to hear what You are saying to us. May Your Word always be revelation, filled with truth and fresh insight. **Amen**

Scripture Reading: Luke 9:37-50

³⁷The next day, when they came down from the mountain, a large crowd met him. ³⁸A man in the crowd called out, 'Teacher, I beg you to look at my son, for he is my only child. ³⁹A spirit seizes him and he suddenly screams; it throws him into convulsions so that he foams at the mouth. It scarcely ever leaves him and is destroying him. ⁴⁰I begged your disciples to drive it out, but they could not.'

⁴¹'You unbelieving and perverse generation,' Jesus replied, 'how long shall I stay with you and put up with you? Bring your son here.'

⁴²Even while the boy was coming, the demon threw him to the ground in a convulsion. But Jesus rebuked the impure spirit, healed the boy and gave him back to his father. ⁴³And they were all amazed at the greatness of God.

While everyone was marvelling at all that Jesus did, he said to his disciples, ⁴⁴'Listen carefully to what I am about to tell you: the Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men.' ⁴⁵But they did not understand what this meant. It was hidden from them, so that they did not grasp it, and they were afraid to ask him about it.

⁴⁶An argument started among the disciples as to which of them would be the greatest. ⁴⁷Jesus, knowing their thoughts, took a little child and made him stand beside him. ⁴⁸Then he said to them, 'Whoever welcomes this little child in my name welcomes me; and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me. For it is the one who is least among you all who is the greatest.'

⁴⁹'Master,' said John, 'we saw someone driving out demons in your name and we tried to stop him, because he is not one of us.'

⁵⁰'Do not stop him,' Jesus said, 'for whoever is not against you is for you.' NIVUK

A time to pause, read again, pray, and reflect.

Reflection:

When we talk of "disciples" I wonder if we really fully understand what we mean by it, or are we also slightly confused about the term as well as what it means to be one?

In its broadest definition a disciple is anyone who learns. In the context of Christianity, a disciple is one who learns from Jesus; the things He said, the things He did and also, and very importantly, who He was (and is). That's why we began this series on Discipleship Lessons last week with the question Jesus asked: "who do you say I am?" (Luke 9:20) with the associated question to us: "who are you following?"

Jesus taught many by the shore, on the mount, the plain and in many different contexts, all who would attend and then follow, He was teaching. "Learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest in your souls"

(Matthew 11:29). You would be right to say that anyone who wants to learn more about the Lord Jesus Christ, to serve and follow Him is as much a disciple as these original 12 men. Therefore, the lessons we can learn from what Jesus is teaching them are just as essential for us today.

“Can there be real Christianity without active and defined discipleship within the church community?” is a question posed by Winfield Bevins to which the answer is an emphatic “no”. D. Michael Henderson provides us with an imperative concerning the growth of our fellowships at Highcliffe and Bransgore -both numerically and in a deepening of faith growth- “long lasting spiritual transformation will come only through disciple building”.

This passage contains four key discipleship lessons which the preaching video explains in detail:

1. Reliance on self or on Christ?
2. Completion only through death -the cross.
3. True greatness
4. Not one of us

Reading Mark’s Gospel 9: 14-41 you will have a further and more detailed account of these events.

Each of these four lessons to clear-up the disciples (our) confusion are of equal importance with the exception of the second. Verse 44: “Listen carefully...” or in the NRSV the more descriptive: “Let these words sink into your ears...” The cross and what it achieves is the most important concept to grasp, the suffering, death and resurrection of Jesus is at the very core of our faith. Consider baptism (dying and rising with Christ, dead to the old and alive with the new) and communion (the bread and wine representing the blood and body of Christ, the joining of disciples in sharing the last meal). Consider the suffering on Good Friday, the waiting and anticipation of the Saturday and the absolute joy of Resurrection Sunday. As disciples of Christ we enter into these experiences, not for our own self-benefit or to make us feel righteous

but to accept that as true followers we are to deny self, take up our own cross daily and follow Jesus. Rejection, sin and suffering in this world “the plain” compared to acceptance by God as His child (John 1:12) and the glory of God (Luke 9:28-36) “the mountain top”.

Many lessons are taught by Jesus but none are more important to grasp than the lesson of the cross: “May I never boast of anything except the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me and I to the world” (Galatians 6:14).

Oswald Chambers writes: “the surest sign that God has done a work of grace in my heart is that I love Jesus best. Not weakly and faintly, not intellectually, but passionately, personally and devotedly, overwhelming every other love of my life”. This level of full devotion to Christ is present in growing churches but deficient in others.

The confusion exhibited by these first disciples is not to be taken as unexpected, they were looking for a “crown to be placed on the head of a king”- a Messiah who would defeat their enemies -the Romans- and install himself on the throne of David. They were not looking at the Isaiah passages about suffering and servanthood, they could not see “a deadly cross that would hold the Messiah”, they did not know that the enemy Jesus would defeat was within them -the sin that separates them -and us- from God.

The current pandemic and the restrictions of the past 9 months have awoken many fellowships to the truth that people who need purpose in life will gravitate to those who have hope, joy in tragedy and trust in something more than their own abilities. Disciples of Christ have reached out to their communities and selflessly offered and served.

Remember that to be a disciple of Jesus is to be willing to learn and take on the discipline and love of being a follower. Disciples are multiplied from other disciples. How about you, will you join me in being a disciple of Jesus and helping to multiply, are ready to learn? **Amen.**

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 18th – 25th January 2021:

“Abide in my love and you will bear much fruit” is the theme verse chosen for this year’s occasion. The relevant section of scripture on which the resources have been based can be read from John 15: 1-17. Each year this week (beginning with the third Sunday in January) is set aside for a particular focus on prayer, reconciliation and unity within the family of Christ -His Church. Often this has resulted in preachers/ministers exchanging pulpits between different churches as a visible sign of a willingness to engage together in the work that Christ invites us to.

The issue of Christian unity is highlighted by our passage and preaching this week from our Discipleship Lessons (Luke 9:49-50) “we saw someone driving out demons in your name and we tried to stop him, because he is not one of us.” Jesus replied: “do not stop him, ‘for whoever is not against you is for you.” Please use this prayer and reflections throughout this week.

Prayer: Lord, You invite us to abide in You the vinedresser who cares for us with love. You call on us to see the beauty of each branch united to the vine, the beauty of each person. And yet, too often the differences in others make us afraid. We withdraw into ourselves. Our trust in You and one another is lost. Come and direct our hearts toward You once again. That as one family we may praise Your Holy name.

Abiding in Christ: the unity of the whole person. Read and reflect on John 15:1-17.

The visible unity of Christians. Read and reflect on Psalm 85 and 1 Corinthians 1:10-13a.

The unity of all peoples with all creation. Read and reflect on Psalm 96 and Revelation 7: 9-12.

Blessing: Be one, so that the world may believe! Abide in God’s love, go into the world and bear the fruits of this love. **Amen.**

More resources on the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity can be found at www.ctbi.org.uk.

Launch of Open Doors Watch List 2021:

Open Doors exists to highlight and support the persecuted Christian Church around the world. Over 340 million Christians live under persecution, they follow Jesus, no matter what the cost. Each year Open Doors produce a country-by-country report concerning the numbers and types of persecution. This year in particular a new weapon is in the hands of those who see the Church of Jesus Christ as a threat and wish to eradicate/convert Christians to Islam or Hinduism or to follow a totalitarian, atheistic regime.

At the event, Henrietta Blyth highlighted the impact of the pandemic on individual believers and communities of Christians who already suffer for their faith. “Covid-19 has given new weapons to people who want to suppress and eradicate Christianity,” she said. “In Africa and Asia, Christians are being denied food aid. In Nigeria and across sub-Saharan Africa, Islamic militants are exploiting Covid-19 restrictions to intensify their attacks.

“In China and North Korea, increased surveillance and control has been legitimised by lockdowns. And thousands of vulnerable Christian women are being locked down with the very people who abuse them for both their faith and their gender.”

“One of the most devastating findings is that the number of Christians killed for their faith (4,761 dear brothers and sisters) is up 60% compared to last year’s reporting period,” commented Theresa Villiers. “It is especially worrying that reports of forcible conversion and forced marriage have increased, highlighting the gendered nature of many of the attacks reported.”

Sudan stands out as a beacon of light in a very troubled region, religious leaders have signed a declaration promoting religious freedom, Islam has been removed as “the state religion” and Sharia law is no longer in force after 30 years.

Please pray daily for the persecuted Church, more resources can be found at www.opendoorsuk.org

Prayers of Intercession:

Dear Lord, we pray that we may have a clear vision of your purpose for our lives and the life of your church. We pray for all Christians everywhere and may they have the courage, strength and determination to allow nothing and no one to deflect them from their path.

We pray, Father that we and all our fellow Christians may be ready for any sacrifice, action and declaration that will clearly demonstrate faith, hope and love to our neighbour, our family and our friends.

Let your peace, joy and love reign in their hearts and help the persecuted to walk humbly before you. May their lives be a fruitful witness and may the seed of your love be planted in the hearts of their persecutors.

We pray for all who have been crushed by insensitive words, or damaged by unthinking actions. We pray for those broken by lies, abuse or the failure to be loved.

We pray for all oppressors for all leaders and governments who are afraid to give their people the freedom to think, act or choose for themselves.

We pray for those who sigh and cry for freedom and pray for the future to be in God's hands. We pray for a renewed confidence in the values of the kingdom of God, for a reassurance that honesty, integrity, obedience, faithfulness, compassion and love are the values that are real. We pray that your truth may be lived and proclaimed as it was by John the Baptist.

We pray for ourselves and ask that when we feel lost, empty and alone may your presence find us, fill us and comfort us, and we pray that you will help every member of the Church to live in harmony with each other, be united in love and be guided by the Holy Spirit to glorify your name with heart and voice. May our lives be a witness of your love, not only in what we say but also in all that we do. We ask it in the name of Christ.

Amen. Contributed by Diana Middleditch

Closing Song: Jesus the name high over all

StF357 Sing/read/pray/proclaim words.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y3Jpx0Rnm_mo&ab_channel=ChetValleyChurches

Jesus, the Name high over all,
in hell or earth or sky;
angels and mortals prostrate fall,
and devils fear and fly.

Jesus, the Name to sinners dear,
the Name to sinners given;
it scatters all their guilty fear,
it turns their hell to heaven.

O that the world might taste and see
the riches of His grace!
The arms of love that compass me
would all the world embrace.

Thee I shall constantly proclaim,
though earth and hell oppose;
bold to confess Thy glorious Name
before a world of foes.

His only righteousness I show,
His saving truth proclaim;
'tis all my business here below
to cry, "Behold the Lamb!"

Happy, if with my latest breath
I may but gasp His Name,
preach Him to all, and cry in death,
"Behold, behold the Lamb!" Charles Wesley (1707-1788)

Benediction: You are God's servants, gifted with dreams and visions, Upon you rests the grace of God like flames of fire. Love and serve the Lord in the strength of the Spirit. May the peace of Christ be with you, The strong arms of God sustain you, And the power of the Holy Spirit strengthen you in every way. **Amen.** Contributed by Diane Karay Tripp

Phillip Dixon, January 2021. YouTube links are external resources and are provided to help you engage with the songs. Singing the Faith and Hymns and Psalms resources are provided under license: CCLI 178182