



Highcliffe and Bransgore Methodist Churches

Sunday 24th January 2021 - Rev'd Phillip Dixon - "The Path of Suffering" Luke 9: 51-62

These written worship sheets are for you to use as we gather, as one, in our homes to worship God. Welcome to the third Sunday of our six week preaching series, using Luke's gospel, to hear what Jesus wants to tell us today about being His disciples. Please join me in praying that each of us will gain fresh insight and understanding from the lessons that Jesus is teaching us. May His Holy Spirit be with each of us guiding us to follow Him on the right path, a path that leads to glory yet one on which we will encounter suffering.

Opening words:

I will exalt you, my God and King,
and praise your name forever and ever.

I will praise you every day;
yes, I will praise you forever.

Great is the Lord! He is most worthy of praise!
No one can measure his greatness.

For your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom.
You rule throughout all generations.

The Lord always keeps his promises;
he is gracious in all he does.

The Lord is close to all who call on him,
yes, to all who call on him in truth.

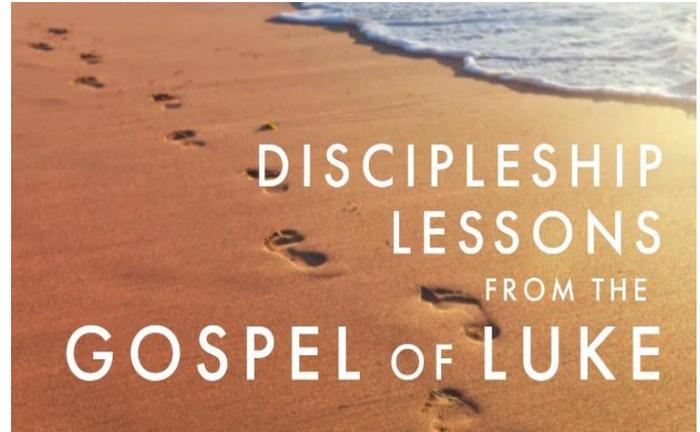
He grants the desires of those who fear him;
he hears their cries for help and rescues them.

I will praise the Lord,
and may everyone on earth bless his holy name
forever and ever. **Amen** Psalm 145 selected verses NLT

Song: Bless the Lord (10,000 reasons)

Sing/read /pray/ proclaim the words.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AUFyowttvmY&list=RDAUFyowttvmY&start_radio=1&t=0&ab_channel=asoVEVO



*Bless the Lord o my soul
O my soul
Worship His Holy name
Sing like never before
O my soul
I'll worship Your Holy name*

The sun comes up
It's a new day dawning
It's time to sing Your song again
Whatever may pass
And whatever lies before me
Let me be singing
When the evening comes

*Bless the Lord O my soul
O my soul
Worship His Holy name
Sing like never before
O my soul
I'll worship Your Holy name*

You're rich in love
And You're slow to anger
Your name is great
And Your heart is kind
For all Your goodness
I will keep on singing

Ten thousand reasons
For my heart to find

Bless the Lord...

And on that day
When my strength is failing
The end draws near
And my time has come
Still my soul will
Sing Your praise unending
Ten thousand years
And then forevermore
Forevermore

Bless the Lord O my soul

O my soul

Worship His Holy name

Sing like never before

O my soul

I'll worship Your Holy name

Sing like never before

O my soul

I'll worship Your Holy name

Jesus I will worship Your Holy name

Worship Your Holy name

Songwriters: Jonas Myrin / Matt Redman. 10,000 Reasons (Bless the Lord)
lyrics © Capitol Christian Music Group

Opening Prayer: Loving and gracious God, thank you for one another, our spiritual family, each dearly loved brother and sister of our fellowship, near and far.

We pray for Your blessing upon us this morning, we pray for Your Holy Spirit to fill us and guide us for the week ahead. Lord, may we encounter You in our prayers, our silence and reverence, our singing and the reading and understanding of Your Holy Word. We come this morning not as a duty, a tradition nor an observance but as redeemed children of light, eager to be in Your presence, to worship You in Spirit and Truth, to learn lessons You teach us and be strengthened and encouraged for the difficult days ahead.

For those who do not yet know You as their trusted and loving Father, speak to them this morning Lord and melt their hearts.

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.

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

Prayer of Confession:

Loving heavenly Father of all,
Creation shows us how great You are,
You see us completely, our innermost,
Nothing is hidden from Your sight.
We are sorry that we do not live as You want.

Forgive us Lord.

We are sorry that we continue to do things we know are not good or pleasing to You like judging others without compassion or holding grudges and we have not done the things that we should have like unconditional forgiveness and telling others of Your great and marvellous deeds.

Forgive us Lord.

Lord Jesus, thank you for dying in our place on the cross, taking all of our sins upon Yourself and providing us with Your Spirit who guides and leads us on the path of a new and redeemed life. Let us therefore continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving so that our lips confess and proclaim the glorious name of Jesus. **Amen** Based on an Anglican prayer of confession and Assurance from Hebrews 13:15

Our Lord's Prayer (the Christian 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 evil.
For Yours is the Kingdom and the power
and the glory forever. **Amen.**

Hymn: Jesus calls us! StF 250

Sing/read/pray/proclaim words.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yByYDzThrSI&ab_channel=AdvocateChurch

Jesus calls us o'er the tumult
of our life's wild restless sea;
day by day his voice still calls us
saying, 'Christian, follow me.'

As of old Saint Andrew heard it
by the Galilean lake,
turned from home and work and kindred,
leaving all for Jesus' sake.

Jesus calls us from the worship
of the vain world's golden store,
from each idol that would keep us,
saying, 'Christian, love me more.'

In our joys and in our sorrows,
days of toil and hours of ease,
Jesus calls, in cares and pleasures,
'Christian, love me more than these.'

Jesus calls us: by your mercies,
Saviour, may we hear your call,
give our hearts in glad obedience,
serve and love you best of all.

Cecil Frances Alexander (1818-1895)

Prayer: Loving Lord God, as we read Your Holy Word together, we pray that our hearts and minds will be fully open to hear what You are saying to us about our lives being devoted to You. May Your Word always be to us a fresh and insightful revelation and by the power of Your Holy Spirit may we be changed by hearing it.

Amen

Scripture Reading: Luke 9:51-62

⁵¹ When the days drew near for him to be taken up, he set his face to go to Jerusalem. ⁵² And he sent messengers ahead of him. On their way they entered a village of the Samaritans to make ready

for him; ⁵³ but they did not receive him, because his face was set toward Jerusalem. ⁵⁴ When his disciples James and John saw it, they said, "Lord, do you want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them?" ⁵⁵ But he turned and rebuked them. ⁵⁶ Then they went on to another village.

⁵⁷ As they were going along the road, someone said to him, "I will follow you wherever you go." ⁵⁸ And Jesus said to him, "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head." ⁵⁹ To another he said, "Follow me." But he said, "Lord, first let me go and bury my father." ⁶⁰ But Jesus said to him, "Let the dead bury their own dead; but as for you, go and proclaim the kingdom of God." ⁶¹ Another said, "I will follow you, Lord; but let me first say farewell to those at my home." ⁶² Jesus said to him, "No one who puts a hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God." NRSV

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

Preaching Notes:

Verse 51 is, for many Christians, a highly significant turning point in the life and mission of Jesus. To "set your face" to do something is an idiom that speaks of a firm and unshakable resolve, nothing will divert Jesus from the reconciliation work between God and man that He has been born to achieve. If Luke's gospel were in two parts this may well qualify for being the start of "Part 2".

By reading the gospel as a whole, as a continuing narrative, we can begin to understand exactly how the birth, life, death and resurrection of Jesus saves us from a life of sin (lesser than how God intended us to live) and brings us into a perfect relationship with him and one another. Without this overarching view of the whole, the individual parts cannot be truly understood. Recall the words of the angel Gabriel from the nativity account (Luke 1:37), "for nothing is impossible for God" or the prophesy spoken by Zechariah, "He has raised up a mighty saviour for

us" (Luke 1:69) and the stated purpose of the birth of John the Baptist as one, "Preparing the way of the Lord, to make his paths straight" (Luke 3:4 quoting Isaiah 40:3). This often spoken of "path" or "way" is a "path of suffering", one which stretches back to his birth as Simeon reminds us in the temple, "This child is destined for the falling and rising of many...a sign that will be opposed so that the inner thoughts of many will be exposed" (Luke 2:34,35). This "path of suffering" leads onwards to Jerusalem and the cross, there are no short cuts or easy ways to glory, Jesus is our guide and teacher and if we follow Him we are His true disciples.

Like us, James and John are still learning and when they ask Jesus to call down fire from heaven (verse 54) they are indignant (perhaps even prideful) seeking instant punishment of the village without understanding God's abundant mercy. "The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:9) and Romans 12: 14 and 17-21, "Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse...Never pay back evil for evil to anyone. Respect what is right in the sight of all men. If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men. Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God." If we wish to learn the lesson of how to react to rejection we must listen to Jesus and not the James and John from this passage. Jesus tells us to shake the dust from our shoes and move on, not with bitterness or anger but with determination for the tasks ahead ("then they went on to another village"). The story that Jesus tells of the barren fig tree (Luke 13:6-9) can also be very helpful to inform us about dealing with rejection and unfruitfulness in our lives.

The commentary from Precept Austin states, "Living as we do in a culture that is seething with anger and that elevates pride to a virtue, we can have some great opportunities for witness if we will learn the lessons of humility and love (from Jesus) for others. If you are mistreated, but you respond with humility and love, you will stand out

as a light in the darkness. Be ready to let others know that it is Christ in you that makes the real difference."

From verse 57 onwards we encounter three "would-be" followers of Jesus. They have a "form of Godliness" but as we learn, lack the commitment and wholeheartedness to put Jesus first. We recall some very significant verses from a previous week, "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me. For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will save it. What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, and yet lose or forfeit their very self?" (Luke: 25-25). From an earlier theme we learn of true love and devotion from Ruth to Naomi, "Do not urge me to leave you or turn back from following you; for where you go, I will go, and where you lodge, I will lodge...your God will be my God". (Ruth 1:16).

William Barclay commenting on these three men states, "Before you follow Jesus, count the cost. No one can ever claim to have been induced to follow Jesus under false pretences". True discipleship is costly, yet it provides a joy and fulfilment that comes only from devotion and faithfulness to God, remember that offering up our lives is just that -an offering, it will be God who uses our lives for His purposes, we must trust Him. The words of "Lord, first let me..." and the excuses may seem reasonable to our ears but they indicate the hearts of these men being toward other things. Barclay goes on to explain that Jesus was not interested in popularity or numbers but being placed first. He sees the innermost desires of all men, He looks at hearts, desires and truly knows our desires and motives.

We conclude with the words of Dr Rod Mattoon, "We can still hear the heartbeat of Christians like Adoniram Judson, William Carey, David Livingstone, D.L. Moody, John Wesley, Fanny Crosby, Charles Spurgeon, and George Mueller. The list goes on and on. They gave the Lord a blank cheque to their lives by saying and doing, "Lord I will follow thee wherever you go." **Amen**

Offering: Had we been meeting physically this is the point when we would have taken up our offering for God's work. Perhaps this is a good opportunity for us to be reminded that our participation in the work of God's kingdom must continue. Neither fire, flood nor indeed pestilence will detract us from answering the needs of our community. In these times of greater need and falling income from other sources thank you to those who continue with their sacrificial giving. Your treasurer (Kate Philips for Bransgore and Ken Sidding for Highcliffe) will be pleased to give you any advice on ways to continue or increase your weekly giving.

Prayer: Lord we offer up our gifts, all things come from You and from Your hand we have gratefully received, at this time of giving, Lord we gladly and faithfully bring our offering for Your work. **Amen**

The story of a reluctant disciple:

You have probably never heard of Albert McMakin but his commitment and love of Christ led another man to discipleship who was to have a significant effect for God's kingdom. "Albert was a 24-year-old farmer who had recently come to know Jesus. He was so full of enthusiasm that he filled a truck with people and took them to a meeting to hear about Jesus. There was a good-looking farmer's son whom he was especially keen to get to a meeting but this young man was hard to persuade. He was busy falling in and out of love with different girls and did not seem to be attracted to Christianity. Eventually Albert McMakin managed to persuade him to come by asking him to drive the truck. When they arrived, Albert's guest decided to listen in and was 'spellbound' and began to have thoughts he had never known before. He began to attend the meetings and went back again and again until one night, he went forward and gave his life to Jesus Christ. That young man, the driver of the truck, was Billy Graham. The year was 1934. Billy Graham in his lifetime led many thousands to faith in Jesus Christ".

It is always very special when someone we know comes to Christ. Many of us have friends and family who have little or no connection with our Saviour Jesus and we should constantly look for ways of sharing our faith. Albert McMakin no doubt led many to Christ in addition to Billy Graham, in this life our faithfulness in making disciples may not be recognised but we can be assured that in heaven we will meet face to face those who have come to have a lasting and saving relationship with Jesus because we were obedient to our calling to "make disciples". Extract taken from 'Questions of Life' by Nicky Gumbel contributed by Kathy Mathew, introduction and summary written by Phillip Dixon.

Prayers of Intercession:

'Father, hear the prayer we offer:
Not for ease that prayer shall be,
But for strength that we may ever
Live our lives courageously.' STF 518 (Love Maria Willis).

Lord God as we take our exercise walks/runs, sit in quiet contemplation, go about our paid employment or our everyday tasks we know that you are with us, guiding, loving and supporting. Thus we bring our intercessory prayers to you, those laid upon our individual hearts now, in this moment Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We continue in intercessory prayer inspired by a local walk.

"The Convenience Shop – Food for all": Lord we pray for those who are finding it difficult to provide the basic necessities of food and shelter for themselves and their families at this time. We ask your blessing on all individuals and the many charities who are seeking to provide help in this country and world-wide. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

"Streams and Rivers – flowing high": As we think of our local streams and rivers flowing high from recent rain we commend to your care all those in Wales, North West England and other areas whose homes and businesses have been flooded. May they feel your presence with them as they

face the days ahead. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

“Boats, Fields and Hedgerows – Sea and Land”:
We think of the many types of vessels which work our seas and pray your blessing on all those who sail in them. We commend to your care those who serve in the RNLI and other seafaring charities. We give you thanks for the beauty and fruitfulness of the land in which we live and humbly ask that you empower us to play our part in the conservation and wise use of the resources of this your world. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

“Families & Friends – Socially distanced”:
Lord in your earthly life you healed the sick and comforted those in distress. We thank you that a number of brothers and sisters are on the road to recovery. We humbly ask your blessing on the families and friends of all those known to us and those known only to you whose dear ones have departed this life in recent weeks. We thank you for the Communion of Saints and for the lives and witness of those of the Highcliffe and Bransgore fellowships who have passed to be with you. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

‘Be our strength in hours of weakness,
In our wanderings be our guide;
Through endeavour, failure, danger,
Father, be there at our side’. STF 518

Amen. Contributed by Win George

Closing Song: Hear the call of the kingdom StF

407 Sing/read/pray/proclaim words.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WLUdwBOQvc&ab_channel=Bridgewater

Hear the call of the kingdom
Lift your eyes to the King
Let His song rise within you
As a fragrant offering
Of how God rich in mercy
Came in Christ to redeem
All who trust in His unfailing grace

Hear the call of the Kingdom
To be children of light

With the mercy of heaven
The humility of Christ
Walking justly before Him
Loving all that is right
That the life of Christ may shine through us

King of Heaven we will answer the call
We will follow bringing hope to the world
Filled with passion, filled with power to proclaim
Salvation in Jesus' name

Hear the call of the Kingdom
To reach out to the lost
With the Father's compassion
In the wonder of the cross
Bringing peace and forgiveness
And a hope yet to come
Let the nations put their trust in Him

King of Heaven we will answer the call
We will follow bringing hope to the world
Filled with passion, filled with power to proclaim
Salvation in Jesus' name

King of Heaven we will answer the call
We will follow bringing hope to the world
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Salvation in Jesus' name

Keith and Kristyn Getty with Stuart Townend.

Hope for troubled times has a name: Jesus:

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. John 3:16,17

Benediction: May we be a people who are faithful and committed to following our Lord Jesus, through the offering of our lives to His service, the suffering when it comes and onwards to glory. Lord we undertake this with our fellow believers in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. **Amen**

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