

TAKE TIME OUT – *Pastoral Retreat*

Half Acre, Horton Heath, Wimborne, Dorset, BH21 7JS
Tel: 01202-824834 – Email: janice.morgan@methodist.org.uk

Third week in **LENT: Wednesday 3rd March 2021 – Zoom 7:30-8pm**
ZOOM participants: please remain muted so that sound is clear throughout.

Introduction:

This week we focus on the themes of power and authority, God's providence and what it means to 'follow'. Many are they who seek power, some believing that they can use it for good, others wanting it as a means of controlling others. Being placed in a position of authority does not necessarily bring control or make life easier. On the contrary, those with authority are expected to take the lead and will often come under attack from those who are discontented or want their own way. True power and authority comes from God, and it is amazing how many times throughout the Bible that He supports those He has called into positions of leadership. In remarkable ways the Lord provides for leaders in His service and also for those following on. Whether we are called to be leaders or followers, with or without power and authority, let us continue to encourage each other. May we support one another in remaining faithful together through our ongoing journey of LENT.

ALL: *recite The Lord's Prayer together:...*

CD: Reflections of Worship; *32 favourite instrumentals: Disk 1 – Track 5*

Luke 9:1-11 *Power & authority, a kings fear, a multitude of followers*

¹Then Jesus called the twelve together and gave them power and authority over all demons and to cure diseases, ²and He sent them out to proclaim the Kingdom of God and to heal. ³He said to them, "Take nothing for your journey, no staff, nor bag, nor bread, nor money – not even an extra tunic. ⁴Whatever house you enter, stay there, and leave from there. ⁵Wherever they do not welcome you, as you are leaving that town shake the dust off your feet as a testimony against them. ⁶They departed and went through the villages, bringing the good news and curing diseases everywhere. ⁷Now Herod the ruler heard about all that had taken place, and he was perplexed, because it was said by some that John had been raised from the dead, ⁸by some that Elijah had appeared, and by others that one of the ancient prophets had arisen. ⁹Herod said, 'John I beheaded; but who is this about whom I hear such things?' And he tried to see Him. ¹⁰On their return the apostles told Jesus all they had done. He took them with Him and withdrew privately to a city called Bethsaida. ¹¹When the crowds found out about it, they followed Him; and He welcomed them, and spoke to them about the Kingdom of God, and healed those who needed to be cured.

Reflection: What Stories to Tell

Andrew and Thaddeus could not contain themselves when they saw Jesus alone in prayer. 'Come on!' said Andrew, 'We're the first back, we have Him all to ourselves!' They both ran to where Jesus was sitting and bursting with excitement both started to tell their stories at the same time. Jesus laughed and held up His hand. Andrew gestured to Thaddeus so he began his tale first. 'We did just as You said, we went just as we are, carrying nothing with us', he said almost breathlessly. Andrew couldn't wait and blurted out, 'It was amazing, just like You said, as if we were on fire with power!' Thaddeus gave Andrew a look! 'Sorry!' He said, and let him continue. Thaddeus told Jesus how they had been confronted by a man possessed in the very first village. 'We were a bit nervous at first, but when we commanded the demon

to come out, he convulsed and was free!’ ‘Yes!’ said Andrew, who was hopping from one foot to the other with eagerness. ‘It was amazing’ he repeated, the poor man had been like that for some years, ever since he stole from a friend and destroyed his boat in anger over some argument’. ‘We spoke to him afterward and led him in repentance’, said Thaddeus. Andrew added, ‘His wife had left him and taken the children because of his temper, but he was full of remorse and resolved to make amends’. Thaddeus continued their story, explaining how a woman, on seeing them deliver the demon, asked them to heal her of a nasty abscess in her ankle. Andrew had knelt down and held her foot praying in the name of Jesus for her to be given a new ankle. ‘Something like oil began to appear in the palm of my hands’, Andrew reflected. ‘It was very strange but I smoothed it into her foot and over her heel as I prayed’. ‘After a minute or two she suddenly jumped up laughing; it gave us quite a start!’ said Thaddeus. Just then two more disciples came running up talking together with the same breathless excitement. James the younger and Simon got the same reaction from Jesus as the first two. This time young James went first, ‘I can’t believe it! He said. ‘We came across a group of men debating at the gate of the town and began telling them about the Kingdom of God’, he continued. Simon joined in, ‘As we were explaining things to them, others, including women and children began to gather round, listening intently, even the children were quiet!’ James continued, ‘When we finished speaking, most of the crowd that had gathered wanted to come and follow You’. ‘We went into a house where a young boy was crippled and unable to get out of bed’, said Simon. ‘We prayed over the boy and for the whole family, as they had all squeezed into the house by then’, said James. ‘And guess what! The boy was healed and even his grandmother’s cold disappeared!’ he said laughing at the recollection. As James finished his tale, so Philip and Thomas came running up to Jesus. Thomas looked grumpy, ‘We got stopped by a Pharisee and his scribe, just as we were about to speak to one of the villagers’, he said. ‘It’s true, said Philip, ‘They ordered us to leave and not to speak to anyone’, he said. ‘We did what you said’, continued Thomas, ‘we turned our back on them and shook the dust off our feet as we left’, he said gloomily. ‘Come on Thomas!’ said Philip, ‘You haven’t told Jesus the best bit yet!’ ‘Oh that’ he said still looking down. But then he could not contain himself and blurted out with great joy, ‘Some of the villagers followed us out and we spent ages teaching them what you have taught us’. Philip laughed too, ‘It was such a boost after being stung by the Pharisee, and as we were talking some in the crowd said they had been healed of various ailments.’ ‘That’s right’, said Thomas, ‘and we hadn’t even touched them!’ As they were speaking the rest of the disciples gradually returned, all in the same state of excitement and great joy. The clamour of exhilarated conversations all blending into one joyous chorus of revelation as Jesus led them on to Bethsaida.

CD: Reflections of Worship; *32 favourite instrumentals continued...*

Luke 9:12-17 *Feeding the 5,000*

¹²The day was drawing to a close and the twelve came to Him and said, ‘Send the crowd away, so that they may go into the surrounding villages and countryside, to lodge and get provisions; for we are here in a deserted place.’ ¹³But He said to them, “You give them something to eat.” They said, ‘We have no more than five loaves and two fish – unless we are to go and buy food for all these people.’ ¹⁴For there were about five thousand men. And He said to His disciples, “Make them sit down in groups of about fifty each.” ¹⁵They did so and made them all sit down. ¹⁶And taking the five loaves and the two fish, He looked up to heaven, and blessed and broke them, and gave them to the disciples to set before the crowd. ¹⁷And all ate and were filled. What was left over was gathered up, twelve baskets of broken pieces.

Reflection: The Greatest Picnic...Ever!

David and Reuben were playing on the hill just outside their village when they saw Jesus and the disciples arrive. 'Hey' said Reuben, 'Isn't that the man everyone is talking about, the one going round healing everyone?' David looked up from kicking a stone, 'I think it might be, they say he travels with a group of disciples,' David replied somewhat disinterested. 'My mum's been raving about Him, says He's going to change things', Reuben said. 'How does she know?' David asked, a little too sarcastic for Reuben's liking. 'My mum just knows things' he said defiantly. 'Come on! She would be right made up if she knew; I must go and tell her', said Reuben as he gave David a friendly shove. They both tore off down the hill and up the street to Reuben's house arriving quite breathless. Reuben's mum was that excited she left her baking and went door to door telling all the neighbours. By the time they got back to where Jesus was sitting, a large crowd had gathered and more were arriving by the minute. 'Told you!' said Reuben in triumph! 'I knew my mum would want to see this bloke'. Reuben's mum clipped him round the ear and shushed him, David laughed, but they both began to listen. The crowd also listened and a strange expectant hush fell over them all. Although Jesus was somewhat lost to sight for many, being right in the middle, His voice came over strong and clear so that every word could be heard, no matter where you stood. Time went on, some were healed, the sky began to darken as the days light dimmed, but no one moved, no one yawned, no one fidgeted, not even Reuben or David! Then some kind of discussion started up between the disciples over a basket of something. The next thing they knew they were being sorted into groups and told to sit down. The boys were glad of this, one because their legs were getting tired and two because they could see what was going on. The basket had a few loaves and a couple of fish in it. David nudged Reuben, 'That's a poor feast to be sure! They're never expecting to feed us all with that, surely!' 'You're not wrong', replied Reuben, 'I've seen better in the bins at the fish market, fresher too by the look of those!' His mum clipped him round the ear and shushed him again, David laughed again! Then Jesus spoke, He was blessing each loaf and placing it in a separate basket; then He did the same with the fish. After all the sad looking meagre offering had been blessed, the disciples came round with the baskets. The two boys were ravenous by this time, having missed lunch and dinner! To their amazement, the basket offered to them was full of fresh looking loaves and succulent looking fish. They tucked in greedily and ate their fill. 'Wow!' said David, 'that was the best picnic I have ever had, delicious!' he said rubbing his stomach. 'You're not wrong there', said Reuben and received another clip round the ear and shushing! Reuben's mum then looked at them both with a very serious expression. 'Oh no!' thought Reuben, 'I know that look, it usually means trouble!' But on this occasion he was wrong. After a pause she told the boys, 'Of course it was delicious! Did I not tell you this man would change things? He can turn water to wine, sickness to health, raise the dead, and even satisfy the hollow legs of two hungry boys! So you both mind what you've heard and seen here today and tell others of the miracle man that gave you the best picnic in the world...Ever!'

CD: Reflections of Worship; 32 favourite instrumentals continued:...

Luke 9:18-27 *Following the Messiah*

¹⁸Once when Jesus was praying alone, with only His disciples near Him, He asked them, "Who do the crowds say that I am?" ¹⁹They answered, 'John the Baptist; but others Elijah; and still others that one of the ancient prophets has arisen.' ²⁰He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" Peter answered, 'The Messiah of God.' ²¹He sternly ordered and commanded them not to tell anyone, ²²saying, "The Son of Man must undergo great suffering, and be rejected by the elders, chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised." ²³Then He said to them all, "If any want to become My followers,

LENT Reflections – 2021 – Email & ZOOM

let them deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow Me.”²⁴ For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for My sake will save it.²⁵ What does it profit them if they gain the whole world, but lose or forfeit themselves? ²⁶ Those who are ashamed of Me and of My words, of them the Son of Man will be ashamed when He comes in His glory and the glory of the Father and of the holy angels. ²⁷ But truly I tell you, there are some standing here who will not taste death before they see the Kingdom of God.”

Poem: FOLLOWERS ©Janice Morgan 2021-March

What must we do to follow the Lord?
Listen to all that He says
For His Word is a sharp two-edged sword.

What must I do the Lord to follow?
Deny all my selfish desires
Evil treats, my heart tempts me to swallow

To follow the Lord what must I do?
Give my life in the service of God
Else my life should be lost and yours too

The Lord to follow; I must do what?
Look not to myself but to others
Worldly gain will not profit my lot

Follow the Lord? Yes we must!
We must speak what He taught
Not in shame of His name but in trust

To become the Lord's followers
Not self-absorbed wallowers'
We must bear our own cross with its burrs

The followers of Christ will stand out
And proclaim what they know to be right
They speak with strong words but don't shout

CD: Reflections of Worship; 32 favourite instrumentals continued:...

Prayer:

Father God, help us to wear the cloaks of power and authority lightly; Lord Jesus Christ, help us to truly listen to Your voice and abide by Your teaching; Holy Spirit, help us to become followers of the Man of miracles through this life and beyond to the next. **Amen!**

CD: Keith Green; the ministry year's vol2 Disk 1: Track 4: The Lord is my Shepherd

The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want,
He makes me lie down in green pastures;
He leads me beside the still waters;
He restoreth my soul
And guides my path in righteousness for His names sake;
Surely goodness and loving kindness shall follow me all the days of my life
And I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever and ever and ever.
Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death;
I will not fear Thou art with me;
Thy rod and Thy staff – they comfort me.
Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of my enemies;

LENT Reflections – 2021 – Email & ZOOM

Thou anointest my head with oil – my cup's overflowing
Surely goodness and loving kindness shall follow me all the days of my life
And I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever, and ever, and ever.
The Lord is my Shepherd I shall not want.

Numbers 6:24-26

²⁴The Lord bless you and keep you; ²⁵the Lord make His face to shine upon you, and be gracious to you; ²⁶the Lord lift up His countenance upon you, and give you peace.

Resources:

CD: Reflections of Worship; 32 favourite instrumentals: **Disk 1**

CD: Keith Green; *the ministry year's* volume 2 **Disk 1: Track 4:** The Lord is my Shepherd

Copies of:

Poem: Followers

Song: The Lord is my Shepherd

For ZOOM: Screen Sharing will be used so no need to print off anything.