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Weekly Letter – 21 July 2024

Mark 6.30-34, and 53-56

The need, “to be with him”

I wonder, do you think you are more of an introvert or, more of an extrovert? If you are to a greater extent an introvert, (those who are born as introverts, range from 24%-40%), then this means, you need time to be quiet, and withdraw yourself from the world to re-resource your spirit, your heart – you! While if a greater part of you is extrovert, you are energised by being with people, and therefore you are not revitalised through solitude! That said, anyone involved in intense activities needs refreshment, but introverts, even more so!

What does this mean for your understanding of being a disciple? Firstly, to grow as a disciple means you need to fully understand who you are, i.e. your abilities as well as your ‘shadow side’, i.e. where you are not so developed. Then with the help of others, work out what resources you need in your daily life, so that you do what is natural and healthy. Myers and Briggs personality tests are well respected. Do have a look at their work!

Secondly, Christ says, (like any good boss), “Let us go away to relax, express what is on your minds and in your hearts, and that of course that means being truthful. Jesus knows his disciples are absolutely ‘bushed’ by spreading the ‘Good News’.

Developing your self-awareness and learning to express your thoughts – your feelings, your questions and your joys are part and parcel of any modern secular developmental session. For a discipleship you need more! Much more! Jesus invites us today “to be with him”, which means, spending time with the living Christ, acknowledging your weakness and your gifts in his presence – and trusting in his merciful love. After all, you know He is wise and more powerful than you! Christ is constantly saying to us, “let go of the reins, and release the cares of your heart”. (Do read Isaiah 40.31!!).

For sure being a disciple is not all about me, me, me! So, it is also important that we make the choice to help to underpin those who work in the church for the good of all. For they can too easily become caught up in the busyness of ‘Church stuff’, and sometimes become rather disheartened. In my very limited experience ‘workers’ in the church can too easily stop reading theology, forget about the role of self-awareness, zip through their prayers, and spend an increasing amount of time talking about problems/how busy they are. It’s oh so easy to fall into this ‘world’, and feel very alone, or feel you are not going anywhere.

We all have a huge part to play in developing discipleship, for each and every person needs time “to be with him”.

Stephen

**Sunday Morning Worship in Christ Well, and on Zoom at 10.30 am will be led by Rev Dr Robert Pope.
Bible Readings: 1 Samuel 15.34-16.13: Mark 4.26-34**

Cycle of Prayer in the Region – we will pray for Temple, Gowerton

Prayers for every household - we will pray for Pwll y Domen

Tuesday - 23rd July – 7pm – Discussion Group in Church Lounge

We will be using Jonah chapters 3 and 4 as a springboard for conversation, depending on how far we get. It will be as much about sharing experiences of life as knowledge of the Bible.

Saturday – 3rd August – 10.30 am in Christ Well – Community Green Coffee Morning

The House that God Builds: Ephesians 2:19-22

Last Sunday we reflected on the resource that our building is for us as a church, but also how we are being built as people into a spiritual temple where God's Spirit lives: that 'church' is the people we are, not just a place we come to. The reflections built up like 'the House that Jack Built' and here is a summary:

The House that God Builds	Connected parts of church life
A roof of tiles of tears and smiles resting on walls where love is the mortar, with the Word and water round the windows of hope giving strength to cope set in walls which shall not fall supportive walls made from those God calls on the firm foundations of past generations in which we have a place through God's grace, for we are the stones God calls his own that make up the house that God builds	Shared experience of coping with the storms of life. Shared meaning, purpose and vision. Held together by God's love working in us and through us. Inspired by the Bible, Jesus the living Word, & the sacraments. Seeing out to the needs of the world; people seeing in to see how God works in people's lives; God's light giving hope. We are 'living stones' built together by God; people giving of themselves, using God's gifts, to build each other up. We are all called and equipped by God, with something to give Passing on what we received from the past, making it relevant for today – Eph 2:20 We are saved by grace through faith – Eph 2:8 God's free gift of love seen in Jesus living, dying and rising. We are the church.

Turning us into a dwelling place for God's Spirit begins with each one of us being aware of God's presence, being open to God's love flowing through us, and praying to be a channel of God's peace between us.

Simon

He takes, he breaks, he heals the broken

(Lectionary readings 2 Samuel 7.1-14a and Psalm 89.20-37: Jeremiah 23.1-6 and Psalm 23: Ephesians 2.11-22: Mark 6.30-34, 53-56)

Forgive us, loving God,
if we have taken your intention in Creation
and made it a cruel destructive parody.
The story tells of how your Spirit moves
and makes this chaotic world
a harmony of all that's good and whole.

We, however, all too often take and break,
then boast of our divisiveness and proudly brandish
labels that speak of who is in and who is not.

In our folly and conceit, we fail to notice
how your Spirit waits for us to grow out
of childish squabbling and calling names,
and lead us to a place where labels fall away,
where healed, restored, forgiven all may live
in Peace.

Forgive us, loving God,
if we have taken your intention in Creation
and made of it a cruel, destructive parody.
Help us instead to gather up the brokenness
within us and around us, and, by your Spirit,
take and make your broken people whole.

Ian Fosten (URC Prayer Handbook 2024)

