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Weekly Letter – 30 June 2024

Mark 5.21-43

Jesus provides the perfect example of why the Church exists

This short story acts like a mini-gospel, for it shows that Christ came into the world to heal and liberate each and every person. Let's see where the story takes us and it may also give you an opportunity to think about the role of the Church.

For twelve excruciating and distressing years this lady had suffered from vaginal bleeding. She had spent an immense amount of money on doctors so that she could be healed, but nothing stopped the bleeding. Here is a woman experiencing severe trauma in an intimate part of her body, and consequently, not only is unable to touch any one, she is excluded from society.

Then seeing Jesus Christ in a crowd she experiences an overwhelming and natural desire for human contact (and thereby the means to be her true self), and this leads her to think, "sod the sacred laws, I need to end my pain and my isolation".

So, she stealthily moves towards Jesus and secretively touches his cloak. She then tries to fade away into the crowd, fearing what she has just done.

Jesus knows what has happened, but his desire is to do more than heal her, for also came to liberate humanity. He therefore calls out to her and says, "Come back, you have nothing to fear". The lady returns to Jesus, prostrates herself before him and tells him the whole truth.

Here is a woman, like so many people who live with repressed pain, feel disillusioned and have grudges against God and this world, but are also desperate to be liberated from their wretched lives.

Here in this safe space with the Christ, she sees herself unconditionally accepted. Here truth is revealed. She is freed from misunderstanding, and she now knows the God of Love.

Do Jesus' actions, words and choices reveal the true role of the Church, and the role for all members of the church? For Christ came to heal and liberate.

Stephen

Sunday Morning Worship in Christ Well, and on Zoom at 10.30 am will be led by Rev Dr Noel Davies

Bible Readings: Mark 4.24-32: 2 Corinthians 8.1-15

Cycle of Prayer in the Region – we will pray for Christ Well

Prayers for every household - we will pray for St John's Road nos.2-60

Tea and Chat - Tuesday, 2nd July - 2-4 pm – birthday celebrations

Discussion Group–Tuesdays July 16th, 23rd and 30th at 7pm in the Church Lounge

This is a forward notice that we will be having conversations, exploration and prayer on 3 Tuesdays in July and you are welcome to join any or all of them. I am open to suggestions about topics or questions that you would like to discuss, but if nothing else comes up, I thought we would start with looking at the book of Jonah in the Bible and see beyond getting swallowed by a whale. Thanks. **Simon.**

Looking back at 1 Sam 17:40 – 5 smooth stones and a sling for tackling giants

Last Sunday we thought about some of the ‘giants’ we face today: environmental issues; wars; famines; poverty and inequality (relative poverty in our own country and poverty in the poorest countries); sickness (from pandemics to infant mortality and funding the NHS); homelessness ...

We went on to think about what ‘stones’ we would pick to help us face these ‘giants’. I talked about the following:

- curiosity – not accepting the situation as it appears, looking for options, reframing for bigger picture
- co-operation – collective strength, building power with each other, rather than power over others
- competence – working from self-awareness of our strengths, not self-protection or ego-projection
- confidence – practicing the skills we need to address the issues, acting ‘with faith’, including in God
- commitment – being whole hearted, not defensive

I mentioned that we could have chosen ‘courage’ (turning up even when we can’t control the outcome) or ‘compassion’ (caring about others affected by the situation) or ‘prayer’, and sometimes just not saying, ‘no’ and allowing things to happen.

I could have said that remembering the 5 C’s or the other possibilities is not as important as reflecting on the contribution that we can each make ourselves, with the tools that we have to hand.

Simon

Let Peace spill out (John Cooper - URC Prayer Handbook 2024)

Force of life and love, You give us each the tools and skills to shape and form your kingdom.
Comforter and friend, You stand with us as we stand up for the vision you placed before us.
Bringer of new life, open me up to a new way of living, so I may be full to the brim with your love,
and let your vision of peace, justice and hope spill out from me.
Through my words and actions, this and every day.

