

Yateley Baptist Church, Sunday 28 June 2020

Opening Prayer

Hymn: Praise 2! 7

In Christ alone my hope is found
He is my light, my strength, my song
This cornerstone, this solid ground
Firm through the fiercest drought and storm
What heights of love, what depths of peace
When fears are stilled, when strivings cease
My comforter, my all in all
Here, in the love of Christ, I stand

2 In Christ alone, who took on flesh
Fullness of God in helpless babe
This gift of love and righteousness
Scorned by the ones he came to save
'Til on that cross, as Jesus died
The wrath of God was satisfied
For every sin, on him, was laid
Here, in the death of Christ, I live

3 There in the ground, his body lay
Light of the world, by darkness, slain
Then bursting forth in glorious day
Up from the grave, he rose again
And as he stands in victory
Sin's curse has lost its grip on me
For I am his and he is mine
Bought with the precious blood of Christ

4 No guilt in life, no fear in death
This is the power of Christ in me
From life's first cry to final breath
Jesus commands my destiny
No power of hell, no scheme of man
Could ever pluck me from his hand
'Til he returns or calls me home
Here, in the power of Christ, I stand

Stuart Townend & Keith Getty

Prayer

Hymn: Praise! 704

Just as I am, without one plea
but that you died to set me free,
and at your bidding, 'Come to me!'
O Lamb of God, I come.

2 Just as I am, and waiting not
to rid my soul of one dark blot,
to you, whose blood can cleanse each spot,
O Lamb of God, I come.

3 Just as I am, though tossed about
with many a conflict, many a doubt,
fightings within and fears without,
O Lamb of God, I come.

4 Just as I am, poor, wretched, blind!
Sight, riches, healing of the mind,
all that I need, in you to find,
O Lamb of God, I come.

Charlotte Elliott (1789-1871)

Reading: Matthew 8:18-34, ESV

¹⁸ Now when Jesus saw a crowd around him, he gave orders to go over to the other side. ¹⁹ And a scribe came up and said to him, "Teacher, I will follow you wherever you go." ²⁰ 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." ²¹ Another of the disciples said to him, "Lord, let me first go and bury my father." ²² And Jesus said to him, "Follow me, and leave the dead to bury their own dead."

5 Just as I am! You will receive,
will welcome, pardon, cleanse, relieve:
because your promise I believe,
O Lamb of God, I come.

6 Just as I am! Your love unknown
has broken every barrier down:
now to be yours, yes, yours alone,
O Lamb of God, I come.

7 Just as I am! Of that free love
the breadth, length, depth and height to prove,
here for a time and then above,
O Lamb of God, I come.

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²³ And when he got into the boat, his disciples followed him. ²⁴ And behold, there arose a great storm on the sea, so that the boat was being swamped by the waves; but he was asleep. ²⁵ And they went and woke him, saying, "Save us, Lord; we are perishing." ²⁶ And he said to them, "Why are you afraid, O you of little faith?" Then he rose and rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm. ²⁷ And the men marvelled, saying, "What sort of man is this, that even winds and sea obey him?"

²⁸ And when he came to the other side, to the country of the Gadarenes, ^[a] two demon-possessed ^[b] men met him, coming out of the tombs, so fierce that no one could pass that way. ²⁹ And behold, they cried out, "What have you to do with us, O Son of God? Have you come here to torment us before the time?" ³⁰ Now a herd of many pigs was feeding at some distance from them. ³¹ And the demons begged him, saying, "If you cast us out, send us away into the herd of pigs." ³² And he said to them, "Go." So they came out and went into the pigs, and behold, the whole herd rushed down the steep bank into the sea and drowned in the waters. ³³ The herdsmen fled, and going into the city they told everything, especially what had happened to the demon-possessed men. ³⁴ And behold, all the city came out to meet Jesus, and when they saw him, they begged him to leave their region.

Devotion & Hymn: Praise! 161

Now thank we all our God
with hearts and hands and voices;
such wonders he has done!
In him the world rejoices,
who, from our mothers' arms,
has blessed us on our way
with countless gifts of love
and still is ours today.

2 So may this generous God
through all our life be near us:
to fill our hearts with joy
and with his peace to cheer us;
to keep us in his grace
and guide us when perplexed;
to free us from all ills
in this world and the next.

3 All praise and thanks to God
who reigns in highest heaven,
to Father and to Son
and Spirit now be given —
the one eternal God,
whom earth and heaven adore —
for so it was, is now
and shall be evermore.

*Martin Rinkart (1586-1649), translated by
Catherine Winkworth (1827-1878)*

Sermon: Matthew 8:18-27 – How Not to Follow Jesus

“Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple.” (Luke 14:27)

Jesus was the opposite of celebrities today

Jesus often used opposites to give examples of how not to live e.g. the Pharisees Matthew 6:5

1. Don't follow Jesus Proudly (19-20)

Verses 19, 20: And a scribe came up and said to him, “Teacher, I will follow you wherever you go.” 20 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.”

Jesus is called “teacher” only on five occasions (8:19, 12:38, 19:16, 22:16, 36), and on each occasion it is always on the lips of someone who isn't and won't become one of His disciples.

“I will follow you wherever you go.”

By referring to Himself as “the Son of Man” (v20) (Daniel 7:14) Jesus is highlighting the man's pride.

The other issue Jesus highlights is that of the cost of discipleship – had the man really counted the cost of following Jesus?

“The Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head”

This man had misunderstood the authority of Jesus – he thought that by following Jesus he would be doing the Son of God a favour.

Jesus knows even at this early point in His ministry that He's going to Calvary – is this scribe willing to follow Him there?

Jesus' disciples must be marked by their desire for increasing humility and true understanding the road of discipleship is the narrow road of the cross.

But what about for those of us who have been followers for a while? Do we still appreciate the cost that Jesus paid for us so we can be disciples? Do we still have the same commitment we had when we first counted the cost and started following Christ? Are we willing to step out of our comfort zones and speak to those who we know need to hear the gospel?

2. Don't follow Jesus Half-heartedly (21-22)

What this man said was in response to Jesus' call to “follow me”.

Verse 21: “Lord, let me first go and bury my father.”

“Follow me, and let the dead bury their own dead.”

Jesus isn't being harsh, saying burial is unimportant, or going against scripture e.g. honouring your father and mother.

The man was saying: "I need to care for my father until the day he dies." He wants to make sure that he serves his father well enough to secure his inheritance.

There are others who can look after his father, but the news of the Gospel cannot wait. True disciples follow Jesus straightaway.

Jesus is asking the man to give Him greater honour and service than He would to his parents.

Jesus says: "I deserve your supreme loyalty and attention." The question is, are you willing to give that to Jesus today, or like this man are you slow to follow Him?

3. Don't follow Jesus Fearfully (23-27)

Verses 23-27: ²³ And when he got into the boat, his disciples followed him. ²⁴ And behold, there arose a great storm on the sea, so that the boat was being swamped by the waves; but he was asleep. ²⁵ And they went and woke him, saying, "Save us, Lord; we are perishing." ²⁶ And he said to them, "Why are you afraid, O you of little faith?" Then he rose and rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm. ²⁷ And the men marvelled, saying, "What sort of man is this, that even winds and sea obey him?"

Verse 26 shows the disciples' lack of faith in Jesus' power. This is the third lesson in these verses in how not to follow Jesus.

Jesus rebuked His disciples for was their "excessive" fear. Fear which pushes faith in God out of the back door. Fear that doesn't recognise who's in control of all of nature. Fear that doesn't acknowledge who is on the boat with them.

In His kindness, He hears their prayer. He stops the seas. He stills the storm. Jesus is showing that even a little bit of faith is still true faith and that Jesus helps us where we are, so we can come to Him without having to try and clean ourselves up first.

Jesus understands weak faith, but He never commends it.

Faith should be a form of bravery - courageous confidence that believes that Jesus is always equal to the occasion, always up to the issue in hand. Why else would He command us not to worry (Matthew 6)?

Examples of brave faith and courageous confidence in Christ: the faith of the leper and the centurion (8:1-13); the Apostles did in the book of Acts; the accounts of early Christian martyrs tell the stories of many Christians who demonstrated courage because of their faith even to the point of death.

"Look carefully then how [we] walk, not as unwise, but as wise, making the best use of the time, because the days are evil." Ephesians 5 v 15-16

Do you want to follow Jesus? That's great news – the best news – go for it! But know that if you do follow Him, you must do it without having faith in yourself (not too proudly), with a single-minded focus (without compromise – He is to be first in everything) and without fear – we are to be strong and courageous because of our trust in Him. Following Jesus is hard, yes, but there is no greater privilege in this life and no other hope in the next.

Hymn: Praise! 754

Be still, my soul: the Lord is on your side;
bear patiently the weight of grief or pain;
leave to your God to order and provide;
through every change he faithful will remain.
Be still, my soul: your gracious, heavenly friend
through thorny ways leads to a joyful end.

2 Be still, my soul: your God will undertake
to guide the future as he has the past.
Your hope, your confidence let nothing shake;
all now mysterious shall be bright at last.
Be still, my soul: the winds and waves still know
the voice of Christ that ruled them here below.

3 Be still, my soul: the day is hastening on
when we shall be for ever with the Lord,
when disappointment, grief and fear are gone,
sorrow forgotten, love's pure joys restored.
Be still, my soul: when change and tears are
past,
in his safe presence we shall meet at last.

Catharina A D von Schlegel (b. 1697), translated by Jane L Borthwick (1813-1897)

Closing Prayer