

18th October 2020
Service Transcript
Trinity 19

Welcome

Welcome to our service for Sunday 18th October. Wherever you are joining us from, we are pleased to share this time of worship with you. My name is Nick Bird, and I serve a group of parishes on the outskirts of York.

Today, in our gospel reading, we hear of how Jesus sent out his followers ahead of him, to heal the sick and to tell them that the kingdom of God is very near. In these difficult times, when there is much that might worry us, we are invited to be open to those who come to us, who lay hands on our lives, and who remind us that God's kingdom is at hand.

Let us pray:

Faithful Lord, whose steadfast love never ceases
and whose mercies never come to an end;
grant us the grace to trust you
and to receive the gifts of your love,
new every morning,
in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

At the name of Jesus

- 1 At the name of Jesus
every knee shall bow,
every tongue confess him
King of Glory now:
'tis the Father's pleasure
we should call him Lord,
who from the beginning
was the mighty Word:
- 2 Humbled for a season,
to receive a name
from the lips of sinners
unto whom he came,
faithfully he bore it
spotless to the last,
brought it back victorious
when from death he passed.
- 3 Name him, Christians, name him,
with love strong as death,
but with awe and wonder,
and with bated breath;
he is God the Saviour,
he is Christ the Lord,
ever to be worshipped,
trusted and adored.
- 4 Surely, this Lord Jesus
shall return again,
with his Father's glory,
with his angel train;

for all wreaths of empire
meet upon his brow,
and our hearts confess him
King of Glory now.

Meditation

St Teresa of Avila was a Spanish Carmelite nun who died on 15 October 1582. Teresa was a mystic, an author and theologian, and a reformer of the church. As the church celebrated her anniversary during this past week, we use some of her own words to lead us in a time of reflection.

Teresa says:

Mental prayer in my opinion is nothing else than an intimate sharing between friends; it means taking time frequently to be alone with Him who we know loves us. The important thing is not to think much but to love much and, so, do that which best stirs you to love. Love is not great delight but desire to please God in everything.

I have often thought with wonder of the great goodness of God; and my soul has rejoiced in the contemplation of His great magnificence and mercy. May He be blessed for ever! For I see clearly that He has not omitted to reward me, even in this life, for every one of my good desires.

A beginner must look on himself as one setting out to make a garden for his Lord's pleasure, on most unfruitful soil which abounds in weeds. His Majesty roots up the weeds and will put in good plants instead. Let us reckon that this is already done when the soul decides to practice prayer and has begun to do so.

Whoever has not begun the practice of prayer, I beg for the love of the Lord not to go without so great a good. There is nothing here to fear but only something to desire.

Whenever we think of Christ, we should recall the love that led Him to bestow on us so many graces and favours, and also the great love God showed in giving us in Christ a pledge of His love; for love calls for love in return. Let us strive to keep this always before our eyes and to rouse ourselves to love Him.

Anyone who truly loves God travels securely. The feeling remains that God is on the journey, too.

Bible reading

After this the Lord appointed seventy others and sent them on ahead of him in pairs to every town and place where he himself intended to go. He said to them, 'The harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into his harvest. Go on your way. See, I am sending you out like lambs into the midst of wolves. Carry no purse, no bag, no sandals; and greet no one on the road. Whatever house you enter, first say, "Peace to this house!" And if anyone is there who shares in peace, your peace will rest on that person; but if not, it will return to you. Remain in the same house, eating and drinking whatever they provide, for the labourer deserves to be paid. Do not move about from house to house. Whenever you enter a town and its people welcome you, eat what is set before you; cure the sick who are there, and say to them, "The kingdom of God has come near to you."

Homily

'In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.'

'Carry no purse, no bag, no sandals.' These are Jesus' instructions to the 70 He is sending out in mission. Jesus is heading for Jerusalem and is still preaching the kingdom of God, but in addition to The Twelve, he commissions a further 70 to do the same, symbolising and foreshadowing the mission of the early church to all nations. He is setting the pattern for all those who are called to work in his kingdom. Carry no purse, no bag, no sandals. Jesus doesn't really sell it does he?! He seems to be asking His followers to set off with no money, clothes or provisions and not even to wear sandals, just walk the journey barefoot. Also, he implies it won't be a breeze as the labourers are few even though the Harvest is plentiful. **And** He says it will feel something like being a herd of quivering little lambs surrounded by the snarling and salivating jowls of a pack of wolves!

I don't know about you, but I know that if it was me setting out, I would absolutely need at least one huge suitcase on wheels, a man bag complete with wallet, credit cards, cash and Filofax. And of course, a mobile phone! How could I possibly go anywhere without it?! And shoes?! I would need at least a pair of walking shoes, running shoes, casual shoes and my cosy slippers. And probably another pair just in case!

But no, Jesus couldn't be clearer, 'carry no purse, no bag, no sandals.' Walk barefoot.....

There is further intrigue. We might have expected that the 70 sent out would have needed to have met certain qualifying criteria. Impeccable backgrounds; exemplary and outstanding character profiles; faultless track records; highly skilled and experienced; the most eloquent speakers, prayers and leaders; the most strong and resilient of people who seem to have all their lives in order; have an unwavering, steadfast faith; a complete sense of being utterly worthy of such a commissioning by Jesus. And yet, nothing of this is even hinted at in the story.

'Carry no purse, no bag, no sandals,' says Jesus. Nothing required. Just walk barefoot. So, what might Jesus be saying to us? I think what he is saying is breath-takingly liberating. And it is something I have discovered and still discovering to be true. We are called to simply walk barefoot with Jesus. He doesn't require that we have this or that. He knows we already have enough baggage that we have accumulated through life; the wolves that lurk in the black depths of our hearts and minds that threaten to drag us down and squeeze the life out of us. We don't need a polished halo; we don't need a glittering array of trophies of successes and achievements that prove our worth. What Jesus is saying is, all I want, all I need is you. Broken, weak, infallible, unfinished you. I will do the rest. Trust me. Let go and give me space for the gift I have to give you.

Jesus Christ invites you to encounter Him. To join Him in harvesting His kingdom. To walk barefoot with Him, just as you are. You are enough. More than enough. You are all He needs. And He, is **all** we need, and He will be with us forever. Thanks be to God. **Amen.**

Intercessions

Dear Lord,

We are all invited to travel with you on life's journey. For some the journey has just begun, full of hope for what might be achieved, the joy of a blank canvas, the possibilities of what might be achieved. For others, the journey has become a struggle, weighed down by cares, and doubt that progress can be made, and others still, nearing the end of their journey, reflect on what has been, which can be joyful and painful in equal measure. Lord, wherever we are on our journey, may we feel your presence by our side.

We bring before you the leaders of our nations. In these troubling and unprecedented times may they feel your presence, know your pattern for their lives and be guided in their

decisions. May they know that your invitation to them has been to achieve great and good things on behalf those, whose care has been entrusted to them.

Lord, wherever we are on our journey, may we feel your presence by our side. For those who have been invited to serve you as health and care workers, and those who are working in laboratories processing test results or researching methods to fight covid 19, we pray you will be with them in their labours, especially when they are tired and in need of rest.

Lord, wherever we are on our journey, may we feel your presence by our side. We ask you to make your presence known to those who are ill or bereaved at this time. Help them accept that to make life's journey with you will not always be easy. Comfort them with the knowledge that whatever they are going through, you will be with them, have not deserted them and that they will never be alone.

Lord, wherever we are on our journey, may we feel your presence by our side. We pray for those who at this time feel lost, without all the routines that have previously defined their existence and meaning. Give them courage to face 'new things' 'new ideas' and new ways of doing things and let them see your presence in this new invitation. The direction of the journey may have changed but your presence is unchanging.

Lord, wherever we are on our journey, may we feel your presence by our side. For parents, especially new parents, we ask that they may journey in hope, not fear for their children. Let them see your presence in the natural enthusiasm and joyfulness of youth, and learn to see the amazing possibilities of what these young ones may be invited to do on their journey with you.

Lord, wherever we are on our journey, may we feel your presence by our side. We pray that our Churches and her Leaders may be open and hopeful in the new invitation which you have issued during the pandemic. It may be a different journey and it may take a lot of courage to put away the old map and look at an updated version, but help us all to recognise your hand in the changes which will come and trust that you will show us the way.

Lord, wherever we are on our journey, may we feel your presence by our side. We ask these things in your name and trusting that you will show us the the way forward.
Amen

Let us pray as our Saviour has taught us.
Our Father in heaven,
hallowed by your name.
Your kingdom come,
your will be done
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours,
now and forever.
Amen

Will you come and follow me

Will you come and follow me if I but call your name?
Will you go where you don't know and never be the same?
Will you let my love be shown? Will you let my name be known,
will you let my life be grown in you and you in me?

Will you leave yourself behind if I but call your name?
Will you care for cruel and kind and never be the same?
Will you risk the hostile stare should your life attract or scare?
Will you let me answer prayer in you and you in me?

Will you let the blinded see if I but call your name?
Will you set the prisoners free and never be the same?
Will you kiss the leper clean and do such as this unseen,
and admit to what I mean in you and you in me?

Will you love the "you" you hide if I but call your name?
Will you quell the fear inside and never be the same?
Will you use the faith you've found to reshape the world around,
through my sight and touch and sound in you and you in me?

Lord your summons echoes true when you but call my name.
Let me turn and follow you and never be the same.
In Your company I'll go where Your love and footsteps show.
Thus I'll move and live and grow in you and you in me.

Blessing

Jesus himself said, "Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." (Matthew 11:29-30).

And so, in these troubled and challenging times, as we set out once again on our journey with God, let us pray a blessing with the help of St Teresa:

*Let nothing disturb you,
Let nothing frighten you,
All things are passing away:
God never changes.
Patience obtains all things
Whoever has God lacks nothing;
God alone suffices.*

So may the blessing of God Almighty,
the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit,
be upon you, you and your loved ones,
today and all your days. Amen.