

Morning Worship for 21st June 2020 at 10.30am
Good morning everyone and welcome to worship.

Opening Prayer:- *(from Roots)*

Lord, help us to share the challenge of discipleship;
Help us to support each other; unite us in your steadfast goodness; strengthen and envision us to face the challenges ahead; and may we faithfully play our part in your mission to this world. Amen

Hymn STF 470 Lord, for the years your love has kept and guided, urged and inspired us, cheered us on our way, sought us and saved us, pardoned and provided, Lord for the years, we bring our thanks today.

Lord, for our world; when we disown and doubt him, loveless in strength, and comfortless in pain; hungry and helpless, lost indeed without him,
Lord, of the world, we pray that Christ will reign.

Lord, for ourselves; in living power remake us, self on the cross and Christ upon the throne; past put behind us, for the future take us, Lord of our lives, to live for Christ alone. *Timothy Dudley-Smith (b.1926)*

Prayer: *(from Roots)* O Lord, we enter into your steadfast love, asking that you will respond to our prayers; we trust in your abundant mercy and ask that you will come to us. O Lord, make your presence known to us; draw near to us; redeem us, set us free; for we seek to be your faithful disciples. Forgive us for all that is past and strengthen us for that which is to come. Amen

We say the Lord's Prayer together.....

Bible Readings for today: Psalm 69 v.7-10 & 16-18 & Matthew 10 v.24-39 if you do not have a Bible to hand the passage from Matthew is a very real challenge about the cost of being a follower of Christ.

Reflection: Over the past few weeks we have been travelling with the disciples as they in turn journey with Jesus, hearing his teaching and seeing the miracles he performed. Last week we saw them go out on mission themselves with Jesus' instructions and in the power of the Spirit. This week's reading is challenging as it sets out very clearly the cost of following Jesus as well as the blessings. A true disciple will need to love Jesus more than anyone or thing else. Whilst Jesus came to bring peace, a consequence of being his follower might well mean conflict even between ones nearest and dearest. These are indeed powerful verses. So today I would like us to think together about the qualities needed to be a faithful follower of Christ. To do this we are going to use an acrostic, so take your piece of paper and write the letters in the word disciple down the page:-

D...is for the discipline that we all need when following Jesus is tough.

I...is for the inspiration we need to find new ways to tell our stories.

S...is for service, a vital part of our discipleship, whatever our circumstances.

C...is for caring, again at the very compassionate heart of our faith.
I...for me, is about identifying my imperfections and asking God's forgiveness.
P...is for our prayer life, the power of prayer so important at this time.
L...is the "perfect love, that drives out fear" (1J 4 v.18) in the Father's heart.
E...is for exhortation, the need for us all to proclaim the good news.
I wonder what qualities you have chosen. In all these things God strengthens us and knows our weakness. Let us pray for God's continuing guidance in our desire to be the best disciples we can be. Amen (*idea for the acrostic from Roots*)

Prayers of Intercession: O God of healing love, we pray for all those still battling Covid 19 and those who are taking care of them. We pray for all who are bereaved and grieving the loss of a loved one. We pray for all key workers in their various roles. We pray for those who have returned to work or school and those who are still in isolation. We pray for all who are worried about their jobs and livelihoods and for those who cannot feed their families. We pray for all who experience racism and prejudice of all kinds and pray that peace would come to all communities ripped apart by hatred and fear. We pray that we would be strengthened to speak out against any kind of injustice we encounter. We pray for our families and our dearest friends, whom we miss profoundly and for our church family with whom we are joined in worship and prayer. Give us courage Lord to be your disciples in this season and to spread your love in word and acts of kindness. Strengthen us Lord for the task. Amen

Hymn: STF 645 Will your anchor hold in the storms of life, when the clouds unfold their wings of strife? When the strong tides lift, and the cables strain, will your anchor drift, or firm remain?
We have an anchor that keeps the soul steadfast and sure while the billows roll; fastened to a Rock which cannot move, grounded firm and deep in the Saviour's love!

Will your anchor hold in the straits of fear, when the breakers roar and the reef is near? While the surges rave, and the wild winds blow, shall the angry waves then your barque o'erflow?

Will your eyes behold through the morning light the city of gold and the harbour bright? Will your anchor safe by the heavenly shore, when life's storms are past for evermore? *Priscilla Jane Owens (1829-1907)*

Blessing: The Blessing of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit, be with us now and always. Amen

Please consider this my "virtual" handshake and please stay safe and well.