



Ripon and Lower Dales Methodist Circuit

with God, in the City, Towns, Villages, and Rural Areas

Your love, O Lord, reaches to the heavens,
your faithfulness to the skies.

Your righteousness is like the mighty
mountains, your justice like the great deep.

... How priceless is your unfailing love!

Psalm 36: 5 – 7

HYMN: StF 36

There's a quiet understanding
when we're gathered in the Spirit,
It's a promise that he gives us,
When we gather in his name.
There's a love we feel in Jesus,
There's a manna that he feeds us,
It's a promise that he gives us
When we gather in his name.

And we know when we're together,
sharing love and understanding,
That our brothers and our sisters
feel the oneness that he brings.
Thank you, thank you, thank you, Jesus,
for the way you love and feed us,
For the many ways you lead us,
Thank you, thank you, Lord.

PRAYER

Lord, creator, friend, brother, King. You are
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. You always have
been, are and will always be. We worship
you in this time and this space, here and now.
As we come before you, you have searched
our inner most being and know us, you know
our thoughts, our motivations, our struggles
and our strengths, you walk with us every
step of our journey and you love us.

We come to you in prayer to offer this, our act
of worship to you. In you all things abide and
through you all things are possible. For all

that our eyes see, our minds aspire to
comprehend we offer you ourselves.

We know that whilst we were way off, you
came and met us in and through Jesus. We
thank you that your love surrounded us and
drew us back into relationship with you. We
thank you that we are freely able to worship
you.

We are sorry for all our actions that separate
us and thank you for your everlasting
patience. So, we ask you forgiveness and we
hear the words spoken by Jesus that our sins
are forgiven.

We come before you now, at this time and in
this place to worship you, unfailing, ever
loving, eternal God.

Amen

HYMN: StF 256

When I needed a neighbour
Were you there, were you there?
When I needed a neighbour, were you there?
And the creed and the colour
And the name won't matter
Were you there?

I was hungry and thirsty
Were you there, were you there?
I was hungry and thirsty, were you there?
And the creed and the colour
And the name won't matter
Were you there?

I was cold, I was naked
Were you there, were you there?
I was cold, I was naked, were you there?
And the creed and the colour
And the name won't matter
Were you there?

When I needed a shelter
Were you there, were you there?
When I needed a shelter were you there?
And the creed and the colour
And the name won't matter
Were you there?
You might also like

When I needed a healer
Were you there, were you there?
When I needed a healer, were you there?
And the creed and the colour
And the name won't matter
Were you there?

Wherever you travel
I'll be there, I'll be there
Wherever you travel, I'll be there
And the creed and the colour
And the name won't matter
I'll be there

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Let us pray:

Lord, through your sacrifice you gave us freedom, you called us to be your people, our names are engraved on the palms of your hands.

Help us, like those disciples before us, to work that others may encounter the freedom of your grace. May we be good news bearers for your kingdom and may your kingdom come.

So, we pray for your church, the people in every place. May they, and we, be a community of those revealing your love through our care, and acceptance, of others.

We pray that your freedom may be known amongst those who know oppression, may the liberty of the gospel be revealed to all who trust in you.

At this time, as any time, we pray for our leaders. The leaders of nations, of communities, of organisations and of our churches. We pray that there will be a desire to bring peace in areas of conflict, relief in areas of need and restoration in areas of devastation. We pray that your will, will be recognised, that those seeking unity and justice will be heard and that the guidance of your Spirit may be a reality.

As we pray, we ask that you will enable us to make our homes into places where others may encounter you. Just as Abraham entertained angels may our hospitality reflect the holiness of the ground we journey over. May we demonstrate grace and love in all our dealings.

And, as we pray for grace and love, we pray for those who are unwell, both physically and mentally. We pray for the weary, the burdened, the broken and the bereaved asking that they may know your comfort and love.

And each of these prayers and the ones we have prayed alongside we ask in and through the precious name of our Lord, Jesus

In His name

Amen

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be 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.
Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours
now and forever. Amen

READING: Matthew 10: 40 – 42

40 'Whoever welcomes you welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me. ⁴¹Whoever welcomes a prophet in the name of a prophet will receive a prophet's reward; and whoever welcomes a righteous person in the name of a righteous person will receive the reward of the righteous; ⁴²and whoever gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones in the name of a disciple—truly I tell you, none of these will lose their reward.'

REFLECTION

Today's lectionary takes verses at the end of chapter ten in Matthew. Jesus calls his twelve disciples, gives them authority, sends them out and, in these final verses, reminds them, in a sense, that they, and their message, will be received, not by all, but by some.

So, today I reflect on calling, sending, and receiving.

To be called means a variety of things according to circumstances. However, a commonality is that to be called means another knows you; they see you. To be known and to be seen is to be invited. To be called, and seen, by God is to be invited into relationship. The only way that is possible for us is to offer our allegiance to God through Jesus, through his life, death and resurrection.

In Isaiah the prophet, speaking to Israel, says 'But now thus says the LORD, he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine.'

Isaiah is called to speak to Israel, Israel is known and loved by God. The first Testament is surely the story of that call, the journey following and all that involved. A journey of coming together, of exile, of restoration, of strife, of unity, of war and of peace. It is the journey of a nation, called by name, who journeyed with God.

In Isaiah 49:16 we read 'See, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands', a promise that speaks of longevity, of intimacy and of permanence.

Yet, in addition to calling a nation we read of individuals called by God. Called with a purpose in mind. Called, not because they were the greatest or because they had life together but because they had hearts open to hearing, and responding to, God's voice.

Just pause for a moment and think of the variety of individuals called: Noah, Moses, Rahab, Samuel, David, Esther and Jonah. But also from the New Testament: Mary, Judas, John, Stephen, Paul. Each one came with

their own strengths and their own frailties but each one responded.

When Jesus called his twelve disciples they were called by name. In Matthew 10:2-4 we are reminded of who they were by reading a list of their names. They were called into relationship with God, through Jesus. And, for those who followed, they were called into a new way of being the people of God.

Each of us is called to be a child of God in that new way of being the people of God. We are called into relationship with Jesus. No matter that we don't have it altogether, God, knowing our strengths and our frailties, calls us by name and asks us to follow Him.

Through grace, free and prevenient grace, we are invited to follow. Reading from Ephesians 2:8 'For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God'. As we commit and follow Him inevitably our relationship grows. As we grow, we are offered the opportunity to respond to that grace. One response is our desire to share what we have experienced as we are able in this place and at this time.

To share is to respond, to go out, to be sent. However, what does to be sent mean for us in this place, in this time?

The disciples were equipped to do the work they were called to. Paul uses the image of the physical body to encourage all who are called that there is a part for all.

The disciples were equipped to physically go out. They were sent to be a part of the inception of the next part of the whole mission of God. They were called to take the message first to the nation God had called, Israel. They were sent out in that place, at that time, to share the good news with those amongst whom they lived.

It is good to be reminded that the message of good news isn't static. The good news message is dynamic. A dynamism that is captured, I think, in Jesus' comment, recorded in Luke, to the leaders as they try to quiet the crowd following his entry to Jerusalem 'I tell you, if these were silent, the stones would shout out.'

If that's the case, then what of the reception to this good news. And here these verses really come into focus. Jesus is clear with the disciples that there will be some who will hear and welcome the message being shared. There will be those who will welcome the message bearer as well. Jesus is encouraging the message bearers going out that those welcoming them are entertaining God through them. That takes my mind to Abraham entertaining the three travellers and in so doing entertaining God himself.

Maybe our challenge for today is to ponder afresh on the dynamic message of which we are all bearers. To remember that whatever we do for Jesus we're also doing for God. And, in so doing to remember that we are in the business of expressing the grace of God we have experienced.

It seems to me that we are called to live the dynamic love of God. Reading from Mark 16:15 'Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation.' We are to go, to sow, to water the seeds of that grace, freely available, amongst the communities in which we live.

But what of reception? Well, surely that's God's work in the hearts of those who hear. Only He knows the heart of each person we encounter and pray for. We should be encouraged as we read in Ecclesiastes 3:11 'He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the human heart; yet no one can fathom what God has done from beginning to end.' That's a good reminder that ultimately, we are called by God to do His work in this place and at this time. But, the response to, and the relationship that results from the acceptance of that grace is in His hands alone.

If we are called in this place and at this time then no matter where we are we can be a part of expressing that good news message. Expressing good news in love through the encounters we have on a day-to-day basis and through the prayers we pray for others.

So, no matter what our circumstances let us respond to the call of the message. Let us respond by using our gifts to His glory and enabling those we encounter to themselves

encounter God. The ground we walk on has already been walked on by God and it is Holy. Then, ultimately, let's trust that God, the alpha and the omega, knows what He's doing!!

Amen

HYMN: H&P 770

Go forth and tell! O church of God, awake!
God's saving news to all the nations take;
proclaim Christ Jesus, saviour, Lord, and king,
that all the world his worthy praise may sing.

Go forth and tell! God's love embraces all;
he will in grace respond to all who call:
how shall they call if they have never heard
the gracious invitation of his word?

Go forth and tell where still the darkness lies;
in wealth or want, the sinner surely dies:
give us, O Lord, concern of heart and mind,
a love like yours which cares for all mankind.

Go forth and tell! The doors are open wide:
share God's good gifts let no one be denied;
live out your life as Christ your Lord shall choose,
your ransomed powers for his sole glory use.

Go forth and tell! O church of God, arise!
go in the strength which Christ your Lord supplies;
go till all nations his great name adore
and serve him, Lord and king for evermore

BLESSING

And may, the amazing grace of the Master,
Jesus Christ, the extravagant love of God, the
intimate friendship of the Holy Spirit, be with
us all

In the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit

Amen

