



Sunday 26th June 2022 – Trinity 2

Led by the Rev'd David Newton

Hymn

1 Dear Lord and Father of mankind,
Forgive our foolish ways!
Re-clothe us in our rightful mind,
In purer lives thy service find,
In deeper reverence praise.

2 In simple trust like theirs who heard,
Beside the Syrian sea,
The gracious calling of the Lord,
Let us, like them, without a word
Rise up and follow thee.

3 O Sabbath rest by Galilee!
O calm of hills above,
Where Jesus knelt to share with thee
The silence of eternity,
Interpreted by love!

4 Drop thy still dews of quietness,
Till all our strivings cease;
Take from our souls the strain and stress,
And let our ordered lives confess
The beauty of thy peace.

5 Breathe through the heats of our desire
Thy coolness and thy balm;
Let sense be dumb, let flesh retire;
Speak through the earthquake, wind, and fire,
O still small voice of calm!

Opening Words

**Almighty God,
to whom all hearts are open,
all desires known,
and from whom no secrets are hidden:
cleanse the thoughts of our hearts
by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit,
that we may perfectly love you,
and worthily magnify your holy name;
through Christ our Lord.
Amen.**

Meditation – A Prayer of Examen

A traditional monastic meditation to reflect on the day or week that has been...

We let the week play back, thinking on the places you have been and the people you have spoken to.

Allow enjoyable moments to surface, however ordinary... and in silence thank God those moments for which you're most grateful.

Now bring to mind the various moods and feelings you've experienced this week... simply notice them. What was life-giving, and what was life-draining? Perhaps there is something that needs healing, or forgiveness.

Finally, look to the rest of the day. Take a moment to place your day and this course into God's loving care, and recollect God's promise to be with us always, and to never abandon us.

Prayer of Confession

**Most merciful God,
we confess to you,
before the whole company of heaven and one another,
that we have sinned in thought, word and deed
and in what we have failed to do.
Forgive us our sins,
heal us by your Spirit
and raise us to new life in Christ. Amen.**

Almighty God,
who forgives all who truly repent,
have mercy upon us,
pardon and deliver us from all our sins,
confirm and strengthen us in all goodness,
and keep us in life eternal;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Readings

1 kings 19.5-16, 19-end

Then he lay down under the broom tree and fell asleep. Suddenly an angel touched him and said to him, 'Get up and eat.' He looked, and there at his head was a cake baked on hot stones, and a jar of water. He ate and drank, and lay down again. The angel of the LORD came a second time, touched him, and said, 'Get up and eat, otherwise the journey will be too much for you.' He got up, and ate and drank; then he went in the strength of that food for forty days and forty nights to Horeb the mount of God. At that place he came to a cave, and spent the night there.

Then the word of the LORD came to him, saying, 'What are you doing here, Elijah?' He answered, 'I have been very zealous for the LORD, the God of hosts; for the Israelites have forsaken your covenant, thrown

down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword. I alone am left, and they are seeking my life, to take it away.'

He said, 'Go out and stand on the mountain before the LORD, for the LORD is about to pass by.' Now there was a great wind, so strong that it was splitting mountains and breaking rocks in pieces before the LORD, but the LORD was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake; and after the earthquake a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire; and after the fire a sound of sheer silence. When Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his mantle and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave. Then there came a voice to him that said, 'What are you doing here, Elijah?' He answered, 'I have been very zealous for the LORD, the God of hosts; for the Israelites have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword. I alone am left, and they are seeking my life, to take it away.' Then the LORD said to him, 'Go, return on your way to the wilderness of Damascus; when you arrive, you shall anoint Hazael as king over Aram. Also you shall anoint Jehu son of Nimshi as king over Israel; and you shall anoint Elisha son of Shaphat of Abel-meholah as prophet in your place.

So he set out from there, and found Elisha son of Shaphat, who was ploughing. There were twelve yoke of oxen ahead of him, and he was with the twelfth. Elijah passed by him and threw his mantle over him. He left the oxen, ran after Elijah, and said, 'Let me kiss my father and my mother, and then I will follow you.' Then Elijah said to him, 'Go back again; for what have I done to you?' He returned from following him, took the yoke of oxen, and slaughtered them; using the equipment from the oxen, he boiled their flesh, and gave it to the people, and they ate. Then he set out and followed Elijah, and became his servant.

Luke 9.51-end

As the time approached for him to be taken up to heaven, Jesus resolutely set out for Jerusalem. And he sent messengers on ahead, who went into a Samaritan village to get things ready for him; but the people there did not welcome him, because he was heading for Jerusalem.

When the disciples James and John saw this, they asked, “Lord, do you want us to call fire down from heaven to destroy them?” But Jesus turned and rebuked them. Then he and his disciples went to another village.

As they were walking along the road, a man said to him, “I will follow you wherever you go.”

Jesus replied, “Foxes have dens and birds have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head.”

He said to another man, “Follow me.”

But he replied, “Lord, first let me go and bury my father.”

Jesus said to him, “Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and proclaim the kingdom of God.”

Still another said, “I will follow you, Lord; but first let me go back and say goodbye to my family.”

Jesus replied, “No one who puts a hand to the plough and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God.”

Reflection

Written by the Rev'd David Newton

Last Sunday at Zoom Church, Charles gave a rather excellent reflection on the Feast of Corpus Christi and the weight of the call to the disciples – and to us – to ‘distribute the bread’. He therefore deviated from the standard Gospel reading set for last Sunday, which was about the man possessed by a legion of demons from the Gerasene. This story ends with Jesus sternly commanding the healed man to ‘Go home and tell how much God has done for you.’

I cannot help but notice the sharp contrast with today’s reading. Instead of ‘Go Home’, the command Jesus gives in today’s reading is, ‘Follow Me’. And if that was not enough, he says to the would-be follower that

there is no time to even say goodbye to those old ties; if one wants to follow, one must do so **now**.

To one person Jesus says 'Go home'. To another he says 'follow me' and don't even say goodbye to Father and Mother. What are we to make of these two seemingly opposite calls found next to each other in Luke's Gospel?

I want to suggest this morning that it might well be important to read those two calls together. We can read them, first, as simply applying to different people. We can read them, second, as applying to each of us at different times. We can read them, third and finally, as two sides of the one call to discipleship for all of us in the here and now.

First then, and on the simplest level, Jesus says to one person 'go home'. And to another 'follow me'. It is worth remembering that those who literally followed Jesus around the Galilean countryside numbered the 12 plus a few others. Luke records 72 who were out in pairs. But most people who encountered Jesus did not leave house and home. Most went home, and told of how much God had done for them. Again and again in Luke's Gospel – and especially to those whom he heals – Jesus says 'go home'.

Throughout most of Christian History there has been an understanding that a few are called to a particular type of Christian Life that involves renouncing the ordinary and the homely. We think most immediately of monasticism. Most people lived out their vocation at home, but a few were told to 'follow' out into the wilderness and forsake the standard patterns of human relations. When Martin Luther came along in the 16th Century he was rather irked with this two tier system, and sought to tear it down so that all Christians might find their sense of vocation in the ordinary: in family, community, work and political society. His message may well have been a necessary corrective, but the collapse of monasticism that accompanied it has surely been a serious detriment to the health of the Church ever since. I, for one, am pleased that Archbishop Welby sees the renewal of monasticism as crucial for the

life of the Church.

We might also think of the missionary movement, and all those who have responded through the years quite literally to the call to 'follow me'. Many continue to respond to this day. But each one who does "go" requires 100s at home to support them financially and give them a 'home' grounding.

A few then are called to forsake all usual ties and to follow on the road, into a monastic cell, or as a missionary in foreign fields. For most people though the call is to 'go home' – to be faithful to what is right in front of us. To work through the messy tangle of relationships and responsibilities that we find ourselves in, even when sometimes it is more tempting to walk away.

First then the call to 'follow' and 'go home' are vocations given to different people.

Second, we can also think of those calls as being given to each one of us at different times in our lives. There are points in our lives when the call of Christ means stepping out into the unknown, journeying forward in faith, and trusting in God's promises alone. For many, the shape of their lives means that this 'stepping out into the unknown' describes life between the ages of 16 and 25. In that period of life, many of us make defining decisions that will then be worked out 'at home' for the rest of our lives.

The call to 'go home' that might come after the call to 'go out' is just as significant, and in many ways might be far harder. It is often more mundane, more ordinary, full of the day-to-day cares of attending to the needs of those we have committed to through bonds of love.

Finally, we can think of the call to 'go home' and 'go out' as two sides of the same coin. We are called to 'go home' and 'go out' at one and the same time, here and now.

On the one hand we are called to 'go out' – to follow Jesus into the unknown, without purse or spare cloak, and without looking back to the plough. This call reminds us that our home is not here. We cannot, and indeed should not ever be entirely at home and settled in this world and with the material comforts we have around us.

As Augustine so famously said, 'my heart is restless until it found rest in you, my God.' Our only home is in the life and love God, and that means that we should never be fully satisfied in the here and now. We pine and want something more, something that we can never fully possess until we see God face to face.

The desire for *something more* reminds us that – whatever the advertisements that bombard us try to teach us – nothing this world offers can ever fully satisfy. Only God can satisfy our heart's desires. And that means – in this life – we will forever be pilgrims on the road, journeying towards that heavenly city.

On the other hand, and at the same time, we are called to 'go home'. We are called to be faithful and steadfast, to take responsibility for those who have been given to us. In a world that loves transience, movement and change, there is something about centring our life around Christ that should therefore force us to stop. The Benedictine tradition has always celebrated 'stability' as one of the key pillars of their monastic tradition. A life of discipleship has to involve some aspect of stability, of fidelity to the commitments we have made over the course of our lives, especially when such commitments feel difficult.

'Follow me'. 'Go Home'. Christ calls us to do both. Amen.

Prayers of Intercession

Written by John Crang

Let us pray for the Church and for the world, and let us thank God for his goodness.

Almighty God, our heavenly Father, you promised through your Son Jesus Christ to hear us when we pray in faith.

We pray for the witness of the Church this week particularly for those who carry major responsibilities as bishops and church leaders, and are always expected to know what to say and do, whatever the situation. Give them compassion, wisdom and the mind of Christ.

Strengthen Stephen and Dagmar our Bishops and all your Church in the service of Christ; that those who confess your name may be united in your truth, live together in your love, and reveal your glory in the world.

Lord, in your mercy hear our prayer.

We pray for Christians working in places of power and influence who make decisions that may affect many people. We pray for Christians in politics, the media, advertising and the financial markets, that they may know how to act and what to say, in order to be true to Christ. We pray too that we may examine our own power over others, at home or work, and use it responsibly, by offering it to the One who laid aside his power and took the form of a servant.

Bless and guide Elizabeth our Queen; give wisdom to all in authority; and direct this and every nation in the ways of justice and of peace; that we may honour one another, and seek the common good.

Lord, in your mercy hear our prayer.

We pray for those whom we love, the special people you have given to us, wherever they may be. We pray for our friends, the close ones and those we sometimes forget, those with a special problem and those who need you. We thank you for each of them and what they give to us. Keep us faithful to them as you are faithful to us.

Give grace to us, our families and friends, and to all our neighbours; that we may serve Christ in one another, and love as he loves us.

Lord, in your mercy hear our prayer.

We pray for those for whom this day will seem long and hard, for those in hospital or ill at home, those struggling with despair or depression, those waiting for a job, or important news, or a friend to call. We pray particularly for those for whom this day will be their last. We name in our hearts any people we know in special need.

Comfort and heal all those who suffer in body, mind, or spirit; give them courage and hope in their troubles; and bring them the joy of your salvation.

Lord, in your mercy hear our prayer.

We remember with deep gratitude those who have left their mark on our lives by giving us love and laughter, but have now gone before us to be with Christ. We hold them in our hearts, knowing that you, Lord, hold them in yours.

Hear us as we remember those who have died in the faith of Christ; according to your promises, grant us share with them your eternal kingdom

Lord, in your mercy hear our prayer.

Merciful Father

accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

**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.

Lead us not into temptation

**but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours now and for ever. Amen.**

The Collect

Lord, you have taught us
that all our doings without love are nothing worth:
send your Holy Spirit
and pour into our hearts that most excellent gift of love,
the true bond of peace and of all virtues,
without which whoever lives is counted dead before you.
Grant this for your only Son Jesus Christ's sake,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Amen

Hymn

1. The Lord's my shepherd, I'll not want;
he makes me lie in pastures green,
he leads me by the still, still waters,
his goodness restores my soul.

*And I will trust in you alone,
and I will trust in you alone,
for your endless mercy follows me,
your goodness will lead me home.*

2. He guides my ways in righteousness,
and he anoints my head with oil;
and my cup - it overflows with joy,
I feast on his pure delights.

And I will trust ...

3. And though I walk the darkest path -
I will not fear the evil one,
for you are with me, and your rod and staff
are the comfort I need to know.

And I will trust ...

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Blessing

May the peace of God which passes all understanding keep our hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God and of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. And the blessing of God...

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

In the name of Christ. Amen.