

Stamford Methodist Circuit

Order of Worship Sunday 23rd January 2022

Preacher: Chris Pursehouse from Deepings Methodist Church

Theme: Luke 4 v14-v21 – Radical Manifesto

Welcome and Call to worship

Call to worship Micah 6 v8

And what does the Lord require of you?

To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God

Hymn 54 I will worship

I will worship (I will worship)
With all of my heart (with all of my heart)
I will praise You (I will praise You)
With all of my strength (with all of my strength)
I will seek You (I will seek You)
All of my days (all of my days)
I will follow (I will follow)
All of Your ways (all Your ways)

I will worship (I will worship)
With all of my heart, sing it (with all of my heart)
I will praise You, with all my strength (I will praise You)
With all of my strength (with all my strength)
I will seek You (I will seek You)
All of my days (all of my days)
I will follow (I will follow)
All of Your ways (all Your ways)

Give Him praise
Give Him praise, I will bow

I will bow down (I will bow down)
And hail You as King (hail You as King)
I will serve You (I will serve You)
I'll give You everything (give You everything)
I will lift up (I will lift up)
My eyes to Your throne (my eyes to Your throne)

I will trust You (I will trust You)
I'll trust You alone (trust in You alone)

I will give You all my worship
I will give You all my praise
You alone I long to worship
You alone are worthy of my praise

Clap your hands all ye people
Clap your hands all ye people
Let the supernatural helper have it all now
Clap your hands like you've never clapped before

Give Him praise (praise)
Give Him praise (praise)
Give Him praise (praise)
Give Him praise, I will give all

I will give You all my worship
I will give You all my praise
You alone I long to worship
You alone are worthy of my praise
I will give You all my worship
I will give You all my praise
You alone I long to worship
You alone are worthy of my praise

Dave Ruis

Prayer of Praise and Adoration

Gracious God,
We praise you for the immensity of your love:
The love that designed and ordered our world;
The love that breathed life into humankind
Creator God
We praise you for the immensity of your love.

Saving God
We praise you for the endurance of your love:
The love that came to share our human life:
The love that died for us upon the cross;
The love that triumphed over hatred and death.
Saving God,
We praise you for the endurance of your love.

Strengthening God,
We praise you for the power of your love:

The love that brought your Church to life;
The love that transforms hearts and minds
The love that dares and cares and unites.
Strengthening God,
We praise you for the power of your love.

Amen

Psalm 19 Jason Silver Sings the Psalms

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ejkWXC0YtDA>

Prayer of Confession

Lord God,
You call us to live as your people-
To walk each day by your side,
Seeking your will,
Pursuing what is right,
And showing your love in our attitudes towards others.
Teach us what you would have us to do.

Forgive us that we sometimes make your call so complicated,
Losing sight of the things you really require.
Forgive us that we become preoccupied with trappings of faith,
Rather than focussing on the essentials.
Forgive us that we are often good at being religious,
But poor at doing justice, loving kindness,
And walking humbly with you.
Teach us what you would have us be.

Loving God,
Help us to offer you the sort of lives you want to see,
And be the people you would have us become.
Teach us what you require,
And by your grace may we live as your people,
To the glory of your name

Amen

Hymn 489

1 All I once held dear, built my life upon
All this world reveres and wars to own
All I once thought gain I have counted loss
Spent and worthless now, compared to this

Knowing You, Jesus
Knowing You
There is no greater thing
You're my all, You're the best
You're my joy, my righteousness
And I love You, Lord

2 Now my heart's desire is to know You more
To be found in You and known as Yours
To possess by faith what I could not earn
All-surpassing gift of righteousness

Knowing You, Jesus
Knowing You
There is no greater thing
You're my all, You're the best
You're my joy, my righteousness
And I love You, Lord

3. Oh, to know the power of Your risen life
And to know You in Your sufferings
To become like You in Your death, my Lord
So with You to live and never die

Knowing You, Jesus
Knowing You
There is no greater thing
You're my all, You're the best
You're my joy, my righteousness
And I love You, Lord
And I love You, Lord
And I love You, Lord

Knowing You, Jesus
Knowing You
There is no greater thing
You're my all, You're the best
You're my joy, my righteousness
And I love You, Lord

Lord we express our love to You
In worship and praise before Your throne
Blessed be Your holy name

Graham Kendrick (b 1950)

Gospel Reading Luke 4 v14-v21

Hymn 255

1. The Kingdom of God is justice and joy
for Jesus restores

What sin would destroy
God's power and glory
In Jesus we know,
And here and hereafter
The kingdom shall grow

2. The Kingdom of God
Is mercy and grace,
The prisoners are freed,
The sinners find place,
The outcast are welcomed
God's banquet to share,
And hope is awakened
In place of despair.

3. The Kingdom of God
Is challenge and Choice
Believe the good news
Repent and rejoice!
His love for us sinners
Brought Christ to his Cross
Our crisis of judgement
For gain or for loss

4. God's Kingdom is come
The gift and the goal,
In Jesus begun
In heaven made whole.
The heirs of the Kingdom
Shall answer his call,
And all things cry glory
To God all in all

Bryn Rees (1911-1983)

Sermon

When an election is called in our country, each of the political parties will publish a manifesto outlining to the electorate what they propose to do if they get elected to office. Manifestos by their nature look to the future and they suggest what the priorities will be if they are elected to office. They might contain pledges to cut public spending, lower taxes,

level up etc. Then when the party is elected if they don't follow their manifesto, or cannot keep the pledges they made, the press and opposition party remind them that they have broken one of their promises.

In the area of business and commerce organisations draw up Mission Statements outlining the purpose of the organisation and what they want to achieve. They are designed and communicated to staff to help motivate them to achieve the corporate objectives of the organisation. The importance of understanding what your purpose and what you are trying to achieve is important.

Our Gospel passage focuses on Jesus attending his local synagogue on the Sabbath at the beginning of his ministry. He chooses as his passage of Scripture to read from the book of Isaiah 61 :

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
Because he has anointed me
To preach good news to the poor
He has sent me to proclaim
Freedom for prisoners
And recovery of sight to the blind
To release the oppressed
To proclaim the year of the Lord's favour

Then Jesus says: Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing

Jesus shares in his home synagogue what he has come to do and be and what the purpose of his mission is and it is a radical manifesto promising change, lifting up and setting free. What can we learn as Disciples of Christ as we seek to follow his way?

The importance of focussing on what matters to God and what is on God's heart

Jesus is focused throughout his ministry and bringing good news to those on the margins, the poor, the oppressed, the sick. He is focussed on liberating those who are held captive. Those who are held back and feel estranged from God through the weight of past mistakes and failures. Those who are held captive to the wealth and possessions and are deeply unhappy. Jesus is saying that he has come to be good news to others, to show through his life and example how liberating the Gospel is and how it can bring people new life and hope as God comes close to them in himself. If you look and read the full passage of scripture in Isaiah 61, it is passage of hope and restoration, the passage is punctuated with words like renew, restore, rebuild.

When Jesus says the words, this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing, he is saying this is what I have come to do and to start, this is the focus of my ministry, this is what is important to the heart of God. Throughout Jesus's ministry he is often accused of keeping bad company, being alongside prostitutes, sinners, tax collectors, lepers, he chooses to do so to offer hope and liberation. He is offering good news.

Jesus stays focussed on his mission despite the temptation to do otherwise and perhaps some of the reactions of others. In so doing he is fulfilling God's mission and purpose.

In the Old Testament, some of the prophets like Micah and Isaiah had to remind the people of God what God was looking for in his people when Israel became pre-occupied with sacrifices, burnt offerings and Temple Worship, rather than being good news to others like the poor and the oppressed.

Micah says:

What does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God ?

Isaiah 1 v17

Learn to do what is right, seek justice, encourage the oppressed, defend the cause of the fatherless, plead the case of the widow.

As a Church and disciples of Jesus Christ today we need to keep coming back to this passage of Scripture and remind ourselves what our purpose and calling is, it is to be good news to others, to the oppressed, those held captive by problems which may or may not be of their own making, to bring hope to the poor and the marginalised. Sometimes as a Church we can lose our focus, we can think that Church is something just for us and what we want to do and achieve. Sometimes our traditions and rituals become more important, and we lose sight of what we have been called to be and to do.

As a Methodist Church our commitments are summed up by its calling:

The calling of the Methodist Church is to respond to the gospel of God's love in Christ and to live out its discipleship in worship and mission.

These are of course summarised under worship, learning, and caring, service and evangelism.

At the entry to the Church where I worship, there is a box for the donation of items for our local food bank. It challenges me each week to think about how I can be good news to those in my community that are struggling to buy food. Perhaps each of us needs to ask the question each day, how can I be good news for someone today ? What can I do today to bring hope to someone else ? What words of comfort will be good news to someone today?

Good News will be welcomed by some, but opposed by others

When people hear Jesus speak and see the note of authority that he has, they spoke well of him, and word spread. However, if were to read on from today's passage we will read that

the people in the synagogue drove him out of town and took him to the brow of a hill to throw him off.

Quite often the good news is not received or accepted by those in positions of responsibility, or those that may have to make sacrifices to help others. When we raise issues of injustice in our society and campaign for change it may not be accepted by those in powerful positions.

When we fulfil our calling to comfort the poor and the afflicted, to speak out for justice we can sometimes attract criticism, be misunderstood, and perhaps be maligned. I was reminded of this the other day when the Conservative MP Ian Duncan Smith who said the other day that he was on a list of people who would not be welcomed or allowed to visit China because he had spoken out about the poor human rights and the persecution of Uyghurs the people in southwest China.

We have help in the gift of the Holy Spirit to strengthen and guide

It is interesting if you compare the different accounts of this event in the other Gospels and you see how Luke places this event. The Baptism of Jesus, The temptations, and Jesus in the Synagogue on the Sabbath. Luke in each of these accounts reminds us of the presence of the Holy Spirit. It is the Spirit that rests on Jesus at his baptism, the Spirit that drives Jesus into the Wilderness to be tempted and it is Jesus by the Power of the Spirit Luke says that is with him as he teaches in the Synagogue.

It is that same Holy Spirit resting on us that will guide us and help keep us focussed on our mission and our calling, just as it helped Jesus when tempted by other ways and means. He stayed faithful to his calling to go to those who needed him most.



A former retired minister sent a typed Christmas Card which had an image of a sculpture outside Salisbury Cathedral called "The Walking Madonna" by Elizabeth Frink. What is interesting about the sculpture is the woman is clearly walking away from the Church with sense of purpose. My friend commented in her letter about how appropriate the image was for Christian Discipleship. As Disciples we should be walking out and away from the Church into the community with a strong sense of purpose and compassion to help others.

May God help each one of us to know and show purposeful compassion where we go as we journey through this year. Amen.

Hymn 664 Lord, you call us to your service

Lord, you call us to your service,
Each in our own way.
Some to caring, loving, healing
Some to preach, or pray;
Some to work with quiet learning.
Truth discerning,
Day by day.

Life for us is always changing
In the work we share
Christian love adds new dimensions
To the way we care.
For we know that you could lead us,
As you need us,
Anywhere.

Seeing life from your perspective
Makes your challenge plain,
As your heart is grieving over
Those who live in pain.
Teach us how by our compassion
You may fashion
Hope again.

Lord, we set our human limits
On the work we do
Send us your directing Spirit,
Pour your power through,
That we may be free in living
And in giving
All for you.

Marjorie Dobson (b 1940)

Prayers Of Intercession & Lord's Prayer

Loving God, your kingdom is a Kingdom of justice and mercy. We pray for the leaders of the nations, that they might rule fairly and with compassion, Respecting the rights and needs of all people and promoting peace.

Today we pray especially for....

Your Kingdom come: **Your will be done**

Loving God, your kingdom is a kingdom of hope and joy. We pray for those in sorrow or need. We remember the bereaved, the anxious and the ill, the destitute, the hungry and the homeless.

Today we pray especially for.....

Your Kingdom come: **Your will be done**

Loving God, your kingdom is a kingdom of love and unity. We pray for the Church here in the Deepings and the Churches throughout the world, asking that we might be true agents of, and witnesses to, your saving love.

Today we pray especially for...

Your Kingdom come: **Your will be done**

Loving God, your kingdom is a kingdom of light and life, We pray for ourselves , that you will guide us safely on our journey through life so that we might come to be with you in your eternal kingdom.

Your Kingdom come: **Your will be done**

The Lord's Prayer

Hymn 483 We are marching in the light of God

We are marching in the light of God,
We are marching in the light of God.

(Repeat)

We are marching, marching,
We are marching, marching,
We are marching in the light of God.

(Repeat)

We are living in the love of God,
We are living in the love of God,
(Repeat)

We are living, living,
We are living, living,
We are living in the love of God,
(Repeat)

We are moving in the power of God,
We are moving in the power of God,

(Repeat)

We are moving, moving,
We are moving, moving,
We are moving in the power of God.
(Repeat)

Siyahamb' ekukhanyen' kwenkhos',
Siyahamb' ekukhanyen' kwenkhos'.

(Repeat)

Siyahamba, hamba, siyahamba, hamba,
Siyahamb' ekukhanyen' kwenkhos'.

(Repeat)

Blessing

To the one whose goodness is without equal,
Whose love is beyond comparison,
Whose mercy is beyond understanding,
And whose power is beyond words,
Be praise and glory,
Worship and thanksgiving,
Now and always

Amen