

Traditional Home service

Sunday 4th September

OPENING PRAYER

Almighty and everlasting God,
you are always more ready to hear than
we to pray and to give more than either
we desire or deserve: pour down upon
us the abundance of your mercy,
forgiving us those things of which our
conscience is afraid and giving us those
good things which we are not worthy to
ask but through the merits and mediation
of Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.
Amen.

PRAYER OF PENITENCE

Come, let us return to the Lord and say:

*God of mercy, we acknowledge that we
are all sinners. We turn from the wrong
that we have thought and said and done,
and are mindful of all that we have failed
to do. For the sake of Jesus, who died
for us, forgive us for all that is past,
and help us to live each day in the light of
Christ our Lord. Amen.*

PRAISE

Let everything be said and done in the
name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to
God through Jesus Christ. Sing psalms,
hymns and sacred songs:

Let us sing to God with thankful hearts.
Open our lips, Lord:
and we shall praise your name.

HYMN 1 (*Lift High the Cross*)

READINGS - Jeremiah 18.1-11
Philemon 1-21
Luke 14.25-33

TALK

CREED

I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth. I believe in
Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who
was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of
the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius
Pilate, was crucified, died, and was
buried; he descended to the dead. On
the third day he rose again; he ascended
into heaven, he is seated at the right
hand of the Father, and he will come to
judge the living and the dead. I believe in
the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints, the forgiveness
of sins, the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting.
Amen.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

*Spend some time praying for our nation,
our community and our families.*

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.
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.

HYMN 2 (*I Have Decided to Follow
Jesus*)

CONCLUSION

The Lord bless you and watch over you,
the Lord make his face shine upon you
and be gracious to you, the Lord look
kindly on you and give you peace;
and the blessing of God Almighty, the
Father, Son and the Holy Spirit, be
among you and remain with you always.
Amen.

HYMNS TO USE

*Lift high the cross, the love of Christ
proclaim,
Till all the world adore His sacred
name.*

Led on their way by this triumphant
sign,
The hosts of God in conquering ranks
combine.

Refrain

Each newborn servant of the Crucified
Bears on the brow the seal of Him
who died.

Refrain

O Lord, once lifted on the glorious
tree,
As Thou hast promised, draw the
world to Thee.

Refrain

So shall our song of triumph ever be:
Praise to the Crucified for victory.

Refrain

1. I have decided to follow Jesus;
I have decided to follow Jesus;
I have decided to follow Jesus;
No turning back, no turning back.

2. Tho' none go with me, I still will
follow,
Tho' none go with me I still will follow,
Tho' none go with me, I still will
follow;
No turning back, no turning back.

3. My cross I'll carry, till I see Jesus;
My cross I'll carry till I see Jesus,
My cross I'll carry till I see Jesus;
No turning back, No turning back.

4. The world behind me, the cross
before me,
The world behind me, the cross
before me;
The world behind me, the cross
before me;
No turning back, no turning back.

Sermon - Adrian Morton
Jeremiah 18.1-11 & Luke 14.25-33
Jesus is an 'all or nothing' kind of person.

The Luke passage is one of those passages that on the face of it, we wished wasn't in the Bible.

We have large crowds travelling with Jesus. He turns to them and says:

"If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters - yes, even his own life - he cannot be my disciple."

When ever we encounter a passage that we find hard to understand

We have to find out what else the bible, and particularly Jesus says about this.

We know he says "Love your enemies..."

Lets assume our father, mother, wife, children brother or sister isn't our enemy.

But even if they were, Jesus asks us elsewhere to love them.
Not hate them.

We know one of the OT commandments says, "Honour your Father and Mother, so life will go well with you."

And Jesus came to fulfil the law, so in Him we are to honour our parents.

Not hate them.

So what is going on here.
I've said it before, Jesus sometimes uses Semitic exaggeration to make a point.

Its a 'shock tactic' to make people stand up and listen.

What's the point he was making?

I think he was simply warning against half-heartedness.

He was saying if you want to follow me, then you've got to be all in.
You've got to be willing to give up what's dearest to you.

You've got to live a life where His agenda trumps your agenda.

<Personal Testimony...>

Sadly, I see too many people who get interested in Jesus, but live life curious, hedging their bets, not quite committed, tapping in at Christmas, maybe Easter...

This passage doesn't allow for it.

Jesus is an 'all or nothing' kind of person. He's calling people to be 'all in'.

And he gives in this Luke passage, two stories, illustrations.

One about building a tower, the other about a king planning to go to war with another king.

The purpose of these illustrations is that Jesus is saying you've got to plan well to follow him.

You've got to count the cost of being his disciple.
Because following Him will be costly.

<We are advertising Alpha today. Hopefully, you've been encouraged to do the course if you haven't done it, you've been encouraged to invite someone you know to do the course.

Alpha is one way, but a good way to give people some time to consider the implications of following Jesus.

Sometimes even Alpha though can make it seem all too easy.
Just pray this prayer, attend church now and again, give 10% of your money...

Before we went all online with our publications and advertising.
The dioceses used to produce a magazine called 'Cross keys'
Amongst other things it had a 'What's On' section that advertised what was happening in churches across the diocese.

Most of the entirees were 'Organ recital at St. So and so; Flower festival at St. Whatsit...

I found it so depressing... 'Go into the world and have 'organ recitals.'

Jesus says if you want to follow me, then you've got to be all in.

You've got to be willing to give up what's dearest to you.

You've got to live a life where His agenda trumps your agenda.

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I love how Jesus doesn't make it easy.

He wasn't looking to be popular.

He almost seems to be putting people off!

He wanted people to follow him who would be sold-out, passionate followers.

Who would follow him into suffering if need be.

Its a call to costly discipleship.

When I look at Scripture, those who seem to have the greatest impact are also those who exercised a costly obedience.

Jesus, of course, is the supreme example.

But even in our first reading, which is from Jeremiah.

If you know his story.

He was called from a young boy to be a prophet to the nation.

He was to speak to king's, the rulers.

The Lord said to him, "I appoint you over nations and kingdoms to uproot and tear down, to destroy and overthrow, to build and to plant..."

Later, God says to him:

... Stand up and say to them whatever I command you. Do not be terrified by them, or I will terrify you before them."

Marvellous...!

Jeremiah had a hard life of costly obedience. Yet his impact was great...

At the end of our passage, Jesus says, "any of you who does not give up everything he has cannot be my disciple."

The Message translation says it like this:

"Simply put, if you're not willing to take what is dearest to you, whether plans or people, and kiss it goodbye, you can't be my disciple."

Its a call to shake people out of any half hearted attempt to follow him.

You've go to be all in.

<David's Tent Story>

Going back to that last verse from the Message version:

"Simply put, if you're not willing to take what is dearest to you, whether plans or people, and kiss it goodbye, you can't be my disciple."

For Sam, it was his job, his home, his country...

What about for us?

And its not that we automatically give things up.

but that we willing to, depending on God's call on our life...

What are we willing to sacrifice?

BJ- says, "Sacrifice is a step beyond convenience."

Our level of sacrifice is a measure of how much we value something.

Whilst thinking this through during the week, I was reminded of the story of Jackie Pullinger.

You will know her story, how she was called as a young women to go from Surry to the Walled city in Hong Kong.

To work with drug addicts and prostitutes. She spent much time praying people off addiction...

In her book, Chasing the Dragon, she tells the story of how the Lord asked her to sell, if I remember rightly, her violin.

It was a prized possession, one of the few luxuries she had left.

She had given up so much already.. yet she sold it.
She was all in.

She is one of those formidable Christians. She was asked what message she would have at a particular conference she was invited to.

She said: "My message is always the same; it's how to get us sure enough of God's love, so we can go out and share it with the lost."

Why does he ask us to give up 'costly' things... to be more sure of His love.

The more sure of His love the more costly we'll give up things?

She was and is all in for that message.

Are we willing to give up our wealth, our things.... for Him.

I don't know if you remember the Rugby player Euan Murray. He used to play for Northamptonshire saints, but he also played for Scotland.

In 2009 he announced he wouldn't play on Sunday's because for Him it was the Lord's day.

So he missed many international rugby matches.

I always remembering saying about Rugby - 'It's just a game.'

He was all in...

Will we trust God with what is most precious in our lives...?

Are we prepared to lay down our own agenda's if need be?

For some what is most precious is actually the need to guard our hearts.
To guard what is really going on deep down with us.
We think we have a need to hold on to our hurts.
Because it will stop us from getting hurt again.

It can be costly to allow the Lord into a deep area of our life.
In order to bring freedom.

How many of us have become comfortable in our faith?

So if we look back over the last few years, we can't see much has changed.

If that is the case, it's likely we have missed some call to costly obedience.

I think the Lord is in the business of making our lives uncomfortable.
Why else would we have need of a 'Comforter'!?

Jesus says if you want to follow me, then you've got to be all in.
You've got to be willing to give up what's dearest to you.
You've got to live a life where His agenda trumps your agenda.

So let's not be those who are half-hearted. Or lukewarm.

Let's not be those standing on the edge, looking in.
Observing others, but not really committing ourselves.
Let's dive in.. with both feet...

Jesus elsewhere says something about all this..

In Matthew 19:29, he says:

And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or fields for my sake will receive a hundred times as much and will inherit eternal life

In other words, whatever we give up, whatever the cost.
It'll be worth it!

Amen!