

*Christ Church New
Southgate & Friern Barnet
26 June 2022*

Welcome

Song: Hear the call of the Kingdom
Lift your eyes to the King
Let His song rise within you
As a fragrant offering
Of how God rich in mercy
Came in Christ to redeem
All who trust in His unfailing grace

Hear the call of the Kingdom
To be children of light
With the mercy of heaven
The humility of Christ
Walking justly before Him
Loving all that is right
That the life of Christ may shine through us

King of Heaven we will answer the call
We will follow bringing hope to the world
Filled with passion filled with power to
proclaim
Salvation in Jesus' name

Hear the call of the Kingdom
To reach out to the lost
With the Father's compassion
In the wonder of the cross
Bringing peace and forgiveness
And a hope yet to come
Let the nations put their trust in Him

Prayer

Song: In my wrestling and in my doubts
In my failures You won't walk out
Your great love will lead me through
You are the peace in my troubled sea, oh oh
You are the peace in my troubled sea

In the silence, You won't let go
In the questions, Your truth will hold
Your great love will lead me through
You are the peace in my troubled sea, oh oh
You are the peace in my troubled sea

My Lighthouse, my lighthouse
Shining in the darkness, I will follow You
My Lighthouse, my lighthouse (oh oh)
I will trust the promise,
You will carry me safe to shore (Oh-oh-oh-
oh-oh)
Safe to shore (Oh-oh-oh-oh-oh)
Safe to shore (Oh-oh-oh-oh-oh)
Safe to shore

I won't fear what tomorrow brings
With each morning I'll rise and sing
My God's love will lead me through

You are the peace in my troubled sea, oh oh
You are the peace in my troubled sea, oh oh

Reading: 1 Kings 19.15-16, 19-21;

¹⁵The Lord said, "Return to the wilderness near Damascus, then enter the city and anoint Hazael as king of Syria; ¹⁶anoint Jehu son of Nimshi as king of Israel, and anoint Elisha son of Shaphat from Abel Meholah to succeed you as prophet.

¹⁹Elijah left and found Elisha ploughing with a team of oxen; there were eleven teams ahead of him, and he was ploughing with the last one. Elijah took off his cloak and put it on Elisha. ²⁰Elisha then left his oxen, ran after Elijah, and said, "Let me kiss my father and mother good-bye, and then I will go with you."

Elijah answered, "All right, go back. I'm not stopping you!"^[a]

²¹Then Elisha went to his team of oxen, killed them, and cooked the meat, using the yoke as fuel for the fire. He gave the meat to the people, and they ate it. Then he went and followed Elijah as his helper.

Confession prayer

Song: From Heaven, You came helpless
babe
Entered our world, your glory veiled
Not to be served but to serve
And give Your life that we might live

*This is our God, The Servant King
He calls us now to follow Him
To bring our lives as a daily offering*

Of worship to The Servant King
There in the garden of tears
My heavy load he chose to bear
His heart with sorrow was torn
"Yet not My will but Yours", He said

Come see His hands and His feet
The scars that speak of sacrifice
Hands that flung stars into space
To cruel nails surrendered

So let us learn how to serve
And in our lives enthrone Him
Each other's needs to prefer
For it is Christ we're serving

Reading: Luke 9.51-62

⁵¹ As the time drew near when Jesus would be taken up to heaven, he made up his mind and set out on his way to Jerusalem. ⁵² He sent messengers ahead of him, who went into a village in Samaria to get everything ready for him. ⁵³ But the people there would not receive him, because it was clear that he was on his way to Jerusalem. ⁵⁴ When the disciples James and John saw this, they said, "Lord, do you want us to call fire down from heaven to destroy them?"^[a]

⁵⁵ Jesus turned and rebuked them.^[b] ⁵⁶ Then Jesus and his disciples went on to another village.

⁵⁷ As they went on their way, a man said to Jesus, "I will follow you wherever you go."

⁵⁸ Jesus said to him, "Foxes have holes, and birds have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lie down and rest."

⁵⁹ He said to another man, "Follow me." But that man said, "Sir, first let me go back and bury my father."

⁶⁰ Jesus answered, "Let the dead bury their own dead. You go and proclaim the Kingdom of God."

⁶¹ Someone else said, "I will follow you, sir; but first let me go and say good-bye to my family."

⁶² Jesus said to him, "Anyone who starts to plough and then keeps looking back is of no use for the Kingdom of God."

Decision making debate

How do we make decisions? Let's think about these statements, is it important, urgent or both. If you think it's important, raise right hand, urgent your left, both hands if both. If you're just not bothered – wave both your hands.

I need a haircut

I need a haircut because I'm getting married tomorrow.

My friend wants to talk to me.

My friend wants to talk to me about painting her kitchen pink.

My manager wants to talk to me.

My manager wants to talk to me about a promotion and a pay rise.

In our gospel reading today, Jesus is walking towards Jerusalem and calling people to follow him. Each person gives an excuse as to why his call is not important or urgent. Jesus calls all of us to follow him. When Jesus asks, it's important and urgent. When he calls, it's the most important call you will ever take. May God grant us strength to follow him with our whole heart.

Song: 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.

Notices

Hymn: 1 My song is love unknown,
my Savior's love to me,
love to the loveless shown
that they might lovely be.
Oh, who am I,
that for my sake
my Lord should take
frail flesh and die?

2 He came from his blest throne
salvation to bestow,
but such disdain! So few
the longed-for Christ would know!
But oh, my friend,
my friend indeed,
who at my need
his life did spend!

3 Sometimes they crowd his way
and his sweet praises sing,
resounding all the day
hosannas to their King.
Then "Crucify!"
is all their breath,

and for his death
they thirst and cry.

4 Why? What has my Lord done?
What makes this rage and spite?
He made the lame to run,
he gave the blind their sight.
Sweet injuries!
Yet they at these
themselves displease
and 'gainst him rise.

5 They rise and needs will have
my dear Lord made away.
A murderer they save,
the Prince of life they slay.
Yet cheerful he
to suffering goes
that he his foes
from death might free.

6 In life, no house, no home
my Lord on earth might have;
in death, no friendly tomb,
but what a stranger gave.
What may I say?
Heav'n was his home
but mine the tomb
wherein he lay.

7 Here might I stay and sing;
no story so divine,
never was love, dear King,
never was grief like thine.
This is my friend,
in whose sweet praise
I all my days
could gladly spend!

Sermon by Ola Laval

Let us pray: Loving God, fill us with your
Holy Spirit. Open our eyes, hearts and
minds. Help us to see you and to hear you
afresh. Amen.

The title of my sermon is Excuses!

I wonder how many excuses we have given to get out of something either for a while or for good. Some excuses are genuine while others border on the ridiculous or funny. I still smile when I remember the joke of the patient who claimed to be unemployed but the excuse she gave for missing her hospital appointment was she unable to get time off work. Then there was the parent who wrote a note for her son to say she thought yesterday was Sunday which was why he missed school on Monday.

A number of excuses were also made in today's bible passages for not doing something straightaway or not at all. Elisha gave the excuse of going back to kiss his parents goodbye before following Elijah.

In the Luke story, the excuse of the first person called by Jesus was I will but let me bury my father first. While the second person gave the excuse of wanting to say farewell to those at home first.

I hasten to add Jesus was not saying we should ignore our family or that we should not respect or do our duties for the parents. In Matthew 5:7, Jesus said, 'I have not come to abolish the law or the prophets but to fulfil them' The fifth commandment said 'Honour your father and mother. Jesus could just see through both excuses, like the ones I mentioned earlier. The first would rather wait until his Father was dead and buried before following Him. Time is of the essence. Jesus wanted the man to stop giving excuses for his delay to follow Him.

Meanwhile, the Samaritans excuse, for rejecting the hand of friendship extended by Jesus by going through Samaria on his final journey to Jerusalem was Jews and Samaritans don't mix. The ancestral reason for the loggerheads, was over where to worship God. Samaritans believed God should be worshipped on Mount Gerizim. Where God gave His divine blessing and

from where Abraham almost sacrificed his son Isaac.

While the Jews believed God should be worshipped in the temple at Jerusalem. Neither was willing to relinquish the belief that worshipping on any mountain or temple for that matter, is not the way to God and eternal life. This long held belief, excused the Samaritans from not welcoming Jesus. Or to accept even until today, that Jesus is the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Jesus. Not by worshipping on any mountain or temple.

The disciples of Jesus were furious and wanted to destroy the Samaritans village but Jesus rebuked them and went to another village. He probably repeated to them, John 12:47, 'I will not judge those who hear me but don't obey me, for I have come to save the world and not to judge it'. One cannot help but wonder what Christian doctrines or interpretation of the bible are used to judge others today. Giving us the excuse to exclude, physically or mentally destroy others because of issues like gender, social status, race or sexuality. Thus inadvertently disobeying the commandment of Jesus to love all warts and all as He does.

Then there was the one Jesus himself handed an excuse on the plate, saying "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head'. Meaning, think it through. Are you sure you want to follow me? Following me may cost you a lot. I am going to Jerusalem to ascend to my Father not to be king. After I have ascended to heaven, my followers will be persecuted, may become refugees and suffer a great deal. Many Christians who decide to follow Jesus despite the warning are sadly still being persecuted today. Many have been killed or driven out of their homes in parts of the middle East, South East Asia and Northern Nigeria.

The story of Elisha is somehow different from those Jesus met. Although Elisha was rebuked by Elijah for wanting to kiss his parents goodbye after he had started to follow him. Saying, 'Go back again, what have I done for you?' Elisha's underlying attitude was somehow different.

The commentary said, Elisha genuinely asked for the permission to have a smooth departure from his family while the men who came to Jesus were making excuses not to follow him yet. Yes, we too can have a genuine reason for delaying following Jesus but must try to keep focussed on following Him as soon possible like Elisha, who quickly said his goodbye and followed Elijah as his disciple.

Brothers and sisters, Jesus made it clear it is not easy to be His disciple or to keep on travelling with Him. To help make it easier to travel with Jesus read the bible and pray regularly. It will strengthen you and teach you.

As disciples, pray for the courage to be on the side of fairness, justice and equity, so His Kingdom can be on earth as it is in heaven.

As fellow-travellers and imitators of Jesus try to live by the Spirit. Be guided by the Spirit and regularly demonstrates the fruits of the Spirit as narrated by Apostle Paul in Galatians 5:13-25.

The good news is Jesus Christ our Redeemer loves us and is forever faithful. Jesus has left us His Spirit to guide and guard us. He has left us with His peace to help calm us in all situations, and He has promised to be with us till the end of age. In 2 Timothy 4:8 we are also told that there is a victory prize in store, the crown of righteousness which the Lord the righteous Judge will award to all who longed for His appearing on the last day. Amen.

Let us pray:

Lord God, thank you for your word. Help us to learn to put you first. Convince and convict those who are struggling to follow you. Help those already following you to keep on travelling with you until the end. This we ask in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour. Amen.

Prayers of Intercession

Loving God, your Word says, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours. In the name of Jesus we bring to you our prayer for the world and for ourselves.

We bring to you the daily work of the Church and each member of Christ's body. Teach us your will and your ways of doing things. Help us to readily follow you and to proclaim you are Lord and Saviour to all. Help us to work exclusively for your glory.

We ask courage and protection for the missionaries. This we also ask for all who cannot freely worship you or openly tell others of your love and salvation. O

Lord hear our prayer-----

Lord restore the countries where war is a way of life. Soften and govern the hearts of war mongers and bring these places back to your just gentle rule. Enough of these devastations, loss of lives, homes and livelihood, Lord. This we pray especially for Ukraine, Yemen, Myanmar and Northern Nigeria. Protect, comfort, help and restore those whose lives have been turned upside down by war, conflicts or natural disasters. O Lord hear our prayer-----

Loving God, we pray for the spiritual health and welfare of our country. We pray for our own local community and

