

Christ Church New Southgate & Friern Barnet

7 November 2021

Song: Come, now is the time to worship
Come, now is the time to give your heart
Come, just as you are to worship
Come, just as you are before your God
Come

One day ev'ry tongue will confess You are
God
One day ev'ry knee will bow
Still the greatest treasure remains for those,
Who gladly choose you now

Song: The splendor of a King, clothed in
majesty
Let all the Earth rejoice
All the Earth rejoice
He wraps himself in light
And darkness tries to hide
And trembles at His voice
Trembles at His voice

*How great is our God, sing with me
How great is our God, and all will see
How great, how great is our God*

Age to age He stands
And time is in His hands
Beginning and the end
The Godhead Three in One
Father Spirit Son
The Lion and the Lamb
The Lion and the Lamb

Name above all names
Worthy of our praise
My heart will sing
How great is our God

You're the name above all names
You are worthy of our praise
And my heart will sing
How great is our God

Reading: Psalm 62.5-8

My soul, find rest in God;
my hope comes from him.
⁶Truly he is my rock and my salvation;
he is my fortress, I will not be shaken.
⁷My salvation and my honor depend on
God^[L];
he is my mighty rock, my refuge.
⁸Trust in him at all times, you people;
**pour out your hearts to him,
for God is our refuge.**

Active Apostles creed

Reading: Mark 1.14-20 by Patricia Balogun

¹⁴ After John had been put in prison, Jesus went to Galilee and preached the Good News from God. ¹⁵ “The right time has come,” he said, “and the Kingdom of God is near! Turn away from your sins and believe the Good News!”

¹⁶ As Jesus walked along the shore of Lake Galilee, he saw two fishermen, Simon and his brother Andrew, catching fish with a net. ¹⁷ Jesus said to them, “Come with me, and I will teach you to catch people.” ¹⁸ At once they left their nets and went with him.

¹⁹ He went a little farther on and saw two other brothers, James and John, the sons of Zebedee. They were in their boat getting their nets ready. ²⁰ As soon as Jesus saw them, he called them; they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men and went with Jesus.

Song: Dear Lord and Father of mankind,
Forgive our foolish ways!
Reclothe us in our rightful mind,
In purer lives Thy service find,
In deeper reverence, praise.

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.

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

With that deep hush subduing all
Our words and works that drown
The tender whisper of Thy call,
As noiseless let Thy blessing fall
As fell Thy manna down.

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.

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.

Prayer

Sermon: God's initiative of love

How much yoghurt do you eat? We eat a lot of yoghurt. One of the brands of yoghurt we eat always has a token included in the pack. This token can then be saved and used to buy gifts and treats for the family. All perfectly normal, we often collect vouchers for money off an item or collect tokens from cereal packets to get a toy. However, this yoghurt

company's tokens are not easy to use. The token is a 15 digit code printed inside the packet. To claim the token you have to log on to their website, register, and then type in that 15 digit code. It's not even just numbers, it's a mix of letters, numbers, and an occasional sign. Once this code is submitted, it gives you a value for your token. 1 code might give you 50 points. I was delighted with this at first, until I realised that the cheapest thing to buy was 1000s of points. I am to a fault a completer finisher, I had started collecting tokens and I was gonna get my free tea towel if we had to eat yoghurt morning, noon, and night. About a year later, I had inputted enough 15 digit codes to get my tea towel. It took 3 months to arrive. It is the smallest, plainest tea towel possible. I haven't kept on collecting the tokens. It was too much work, too boring and dull tapping in these long codes and for very little. I think I even had to pay postage. All the effort was on my part. It didn't really build customer relations, nor ownership of the brand, it was just draining.

Maybe you have had a similar experience, when a relationship – even with a company – has all been one way. You might have emailed, called, written, tweeted a company about a refund you are due and gotten nowhere. You might have a friend who you constantly call, arrange to see, send gifts to but who never seems to reciprocate. You might have a family member who you have constantly cared for, tried to support, tried to include and nothing is given in return.

God is not like this.
God is not like this.

Right here at the beginning of Marks gospel we see God taking the initiative with us. No longer are the people of God banging on heaven's door, he has come to the earth. God sends Jesus his son to the earth. God takes the initiative. God equips Jesus with power and authority to teach and heal, God takes the initiative. Jesus calls anyone who will listen to

see that the Kingdom has come. The kingdom is of God, it's God's plan to build the kingdom of God. And this is good news, good news has come to us.

God's good news is that now is the time, come now is the time. For the kingdom of God is near. The Kingdom of God isn't a country, it is wherever God is king. The Kingdom can be found wherever faithful people are loving others as they love themselves, wherever peacemakers sow in peace, wherever joy and love shape our lives, wherever healing and transformation is present. This is the kingdom, and it's not a silly token that you have to earn thousands of to see any benefit. The kingdom of God is right here right now, for Jesus came to this earth and said : the time is right, the kingdom of god is near. And it is still near.

God does not leave us alone on this earth to struggle and strain to meet him, to know love, grace, mercy, happiness and wholeness he sends Jesus. He sends the Holy Spirit and he has given us his word and the church to equip us to meet with him. God takes the initiative because he loves us.

When I got my tiny tea towel, I felt cheated. And a little foolish. I thought that taking the challenge on of collecting enough tokens would make me feel proud, like I'd won something. The reality of the world is that it often disappoints.

As Jesus walked in the busy fishing trading post of Galilee, he called to Simon, Andrew, James and John. He called with a command. Come with me: I'll teach you to fish for people. And immediately they followed him. Sometimes we are deeply troubled by the speed of these men's decision. How could they just get up and follow? How could they not? When the son of God comes to you and says follow me. When you've heard him preach: this is a special time, a time where God's kingdom is near. Turn away from sin,

be transformed by God and believe. Then you know that this offer is different. This offer isn't tokens for tiny tea towels, this is an offer that is life-changing. This offer is a once in a lifetime call, a call to be part of Jesus' ministry. To be present at the miracles, to see healings, to receive teaching direct from the son of God, to see the dead rise. This is the kind of offer that we all know is good one. One that speaks of a God who is deeply committed to his children and yearns for us to work with him.

It is the same God who takes the initiative with us. His Spirit is at work in our lives. If you're here in the building, if you're watching online – God has been calling you. Calling you to be part of his church and this community. If you're finding yourself more interested in prayer, in reading the bible, God is calling you. If you're wanting to serve others like Jesus served, God is calling you. It is God who calls us. God is the friend who always calls, texts, knocks on and asks us all to follow. God is the one who takes the initiative. Why? Because he loves us, he made us and invites us to build his kingdom together.

When God comes to us, and he does. Here at church, at home, in the workplace – what is our response? May we take seriously the call to a life turned away from sin, from bad-mouthing others, from wrong actions that harm others, from a life with a back towards God. May our hearts be overflowing with the joy that comes from knowing God loves us, and takes the initiative with each of his children. Amen.

Song: Be the centre
Jesus, be the centre
Be my source, be my light
Jesus

Jesus, be the centre
Be my hope, be my song
Jesus

Be the fire in my heart
Be the wind in these sails
Be the reason that I live
Jesus, Jesus

Jesus, be my vision
Be my path, be my guide
Jesus

Communion

For the bread we eat day by day:

God be blessed forever

For the bread of the great day

That feeds us for new life

God be blessed forever

Jesus said: I am the living bread.
Touch all our lives and shape us for your
new day
God be blessed forever

Nourish us with bread for the journey
Disciples on your way
This day and always

Come, Holy Spirit
Feed us with your love
And renew us with your life

We eat to remember.

For the cup that sustains and delights
God be blessed for ever

For the cup
That seals the covenant
God be blessed for ever

Jesus said: I am the vine
Make our hearts glad and lives safe.
God be blessed for ever

Come, Holy Spirit
Fill us with your love
And renew us with your life

We drink to remember.

Intercession

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.

Blessing

Lord of Life,
through the resurrection
of Jesus Christ from the dead
a door has cracked open
and your new creation
has been set loose in our world.

By your Spirit,
enable us this day
to participate in his dying
and rising and so share the life of Christ
with all whom we meet. Amen.