

Sunday Morning Resources

Sunday 7 September 2025 - The Twelfth Sunday after Trinity

Lectionary Readings (depending on the kind of service you are leading, you may use one or more of the following readings – however, you **must** use the gospel reading, as this is what the homily is based on)

Deuteronomy 30.15–end; Psalm 1; Philemon 1–21; Luke 14.25–33

Homily

Today's homily has been written by the Revd Jane Rees, Priest - Associate Vicar, March (Benefice)

The cost of discipleship - Luke 14

Would you describe yourself as a fan of Jesus or a follower of Jesus?

It's not an easy question to answer.

Are you someone who admires the person of Jesus and his teachings or would you say that you seek to live your life under his authority and in obedience to his commands?

In our gospel reading today Jesus is speaking to the large crowds that are fans of Jesus. They have turned out once again to hear him speak, to listen to his teaching, to witness any argy-bargy he has with the church authorities and hopefully to be part of a miracle or healing.

But as the sun sets on the Judean hillside the crowds will return to their homes and for many of them their lives will carry on just as they did before.

Jesus knew this for he knows the depths of every human heart.

So, in simple terms he shares with the crowds what we refer to as the “cost of discipleship” - in other words what it will really involve if we are to be a follower of Jesus.

“Whoever comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and even life itself, cannot be my disciple. Whoever does not carry the cross and follow me cannot be my disciple

Jesus is saying that our love for him should be greater than our love even for our closest family. Our love for him is to be such that by comparison all other relations are held with an open hand.

Jesus is not by any means promoting hatred in this reading - he is putting things in the right order - we are to love him above all else - all our relationships and all our worldly attachments.

The mystery is that when we do follow in this way - when we agree to love Jesus more than anything else we then find that our love for our friends and family and yes even our enemies too changes; it grows and becomes the kind of love that God seeks it to be.

Quite often most of us say we want to follow Jesus and at the same time we hold on to the life we want to live - we ask God for help with our schedule or our plans or we ask him to bless what we are already doing.

But Jesus didn't say to the twelve disciples: what are your plans for today? How can I help you? He said to them: Follow me.

If we hold on to the life we choose for ourselves we are not really his followers. Being a disciple of Jesus means letting the old life go and living a new life altogether.

Some months ago, a couple won first prize in a well-known competition - they won a villa in the south of France. It had a swimming pool, a balcony with a view over the ocean and several acres of stunning grounds. A car and a housekeeper were included in the prize.

But they had many attachments here and hesitated to go.

The reality was that however much the couple shared the news of their amazing win - until they packed up and left their current home for France that new life would never be theirs.

It would just be something that they dreamed of and talked about.

And in a similar way we often approach our faith like this - we believe in eternal life and Jesus always being with us and answering our prayers and petitions....

Even so, the idea of leaving our old attitudes, behaviours and plans behind and living a new life for him is not something that comes easily to many of us.

And this is what Jesus addresses this morning with transparency - He doesn't say that being a disciple will be easy. On the contrary it may cost us a great deal.

But the same Jesus who said carry the cross, give up all and follow me also said I came so that you might have life in abundance. Jesus will give us more than we can imagine or comprehend and the joy of life with him in eternity but to receive this life we have to be willing and ready to give everything away. This is the great paradox of the gospel.

So, today, as we reflect upon Jesus' call to follow him – we can do so without fear. Because when we say “yes” to following him with all of our heart, mind, soul, and strength, we know that cross is never the end of the story. The way of the Gospel leads to glory, to joy, and always to abundant life.

Amen.

Ways to Engage all Generations

When different generations are gathered together in worship there is an opportunity to build relationships and to encounter God in our conversations as we build relationships and learn from each other no matter what our ages, stage of life or faith and for all present to feel included. Adding some wondering questions to the service at an appropriate moment can help to do this.

Wondering Questions: Some wondering questions that may help to engage all generations to ponder and explore during the talk, service or during the week may include (three or so) of the following style of questions:

- I wonder what your favourite part of the story/passage is? I wonder why that is?
- I wonder who your favourite character is? I wonder why that is?
- I wonder how _____ felt or I wonder how _____ felt when _____ happened?
- I wonder how you feel about _____?
- I wonder where you are in this story?
- I wonder what part of the story is about you?
- I wonder what the [tree, pearl, coin] could really be?
- I wonder why _____ said _____?
- I wonder what we can learn about God in this story?

Suggested intercessions

Based on CW prayers:

Let us by prayer and intercession with thanksgiving
make our requests to God

Gracious God,

We pray for peace, justice and reconciliation throughout the world.

We pray for the honouring of human rights, and for the relief of the oppressed.

We give thanks for all that is gracious in the lives of men, women and children.

Lord in your mercy

Hear our prayer

We pray for the renewal of the Church in faith, love and service.

We pray for Dagmar, our bishop and for the life of this parish/community.

We give thanks for the gift of your word, the grace of the sacraments
and the fellowship of your people.

Lord in your mercy

Hear our prayer

We pray for this local community and for all people in their daily life and work.

We pray for the young and the elderly, for families, and all who are alone.

We give thanks for human skill and creativity
and all that reveals your loveliness.

Lord in your mercy

Hear our prayer

We pray for those who are in need;

for the sick, sorrowful and bereaved,

Remembering those who have particularly asked for our prayers this week

We pray for all who bring comfort, care and healing.

We give thanks for human love and friendship

and for all that enriches our daily lives.

Lord in your mercy
Hear our prayer

We remember those who have been recently bereaved and any anniversaries of years mind that fall this week

Let us commend ourselves, and all for whom we pray,
to the mercy and protection of God.

Merciful Father

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

Amen

Suggested hymns/songs

Be thou my vision

Fight the good fight

Forth in thy name O Lord I go

He who would valiant be

In Christ alone

I want to walk as a child of the light

Just as I am

O Jesus I have promised

Take my life and let it be

Take up thy cross

Will you come and follow me

Activities to accompany the service

If you are looking for resources to accompany the service for engaging younger children, then there are lots of online resources. The following free to access/download resources may be useful starting points:

- <https://flamecreativekids.blogspot.com/>
- <https://www.pinterest.co.uk/MessyChurchBRF/>
- <https://www.faithinkids.org/>
- [reflectionary.org](https://www.reflectionary.org/) – lectionary-based resources
- [engageworship](https://www.engageworship.org/) – in particular 'Area 52' for lectionary-based material
- <https://www.bdeducation.org.uk/product-category/primary-age-5-11/>
(weekly@ lectionary resource)