

This morning we are looking at a gospel reading that seems a bit disjointed.

Jesus is travelling through his home territory of Galilee, where he grew up. He has begun preparing his disciples for what is to come. What is waiting for him in Jerusalem and the cost of following him.

He needed to equip them and to do this he needed to get them away from the hustle and bustle of the peoples demands and teach them uninterrupted.

He has revealed His true divine nature to his three closest disciples on the mount of transfiguration. Dazzled James, John and Peter when his clothing became whiter than white, whilst having a conversation with Elijah and Moses.

And He had shown his disciples his amazing power over sin by healing the demon possessed boy that the other disciples had been unable to help, whilst Jesus was up the mountain.

The tension is building up, and Jesus needs to teach his men so they can be prepared to carry on the work and mission of sharing the good news when he is gone.

The disciples are oblivious to what he is saying they think the new kingdom will be on earth with positions of power for them. They do not understand. And this is clear to Jesus as they argue over who is the greatest.

They are too scared and possibly a bit ashamed to ask questions and admit to their argument.

So, Jesus with such patience explains by holding a child.

At that time, in that culture, children were of no consequence. They had no legal protection, no status, no rights.

True greatness isn't about social standing.. climbing that ladder of power and influence.

In Jesus' kingdom, true greatness is being humble, lowly and vulnerable as a child.

To take the lowest place and to welcome and care for those with no status.

The upside down world of the Kingdom.

Right at the beginning we read that Jesus lay aside the work to teach. To teach his friends.

And his friends needed to learn and not work.

We are so blessed in this church to have 7 people who are prepared to stand up here at the front and share with us what God has been showing them.

7 different voices. 7 different approaches. Granted two of them sort of have to! It's in their job description!

But it is so healthy to be taught by more than that.

We all want to learn from each other.

We want to see something new. We want to draw closer to our God.

But teaching is a responsibility.

Carols amazing talk last week about the power of the tongue is such an important message.

The scripture began with the verse 'My dear brothers and sisters don't be so eager to become a teacher in church since you know that we who teach are held to a higher standard of judgement.' James 3 v1

Please know that we take it seriously. We know it is a big responsibility. It's scary. It may make you wonder, why do it then?

That is a good question and I can only say that good and inspiring teachers have built a passion in me for scripture.

It began with my RE teacher who was wonderful in explaining the background to passages. I find understanding the culture at the time so exciting. It opens up the words to mean more. So much more.

When I left home to become a nurse I joined the Chinese Christian fellowship! I know ! Not Chinese, but that group welcomed me and taught me so much.

I have been involved in Bible Study for 24 years and 11 of those have been studying with an American preacher called Beth Moore.

The studies have involved setting aside time to learn. To work through a member book and hear this lady preach. And it has been exciting. Building a desire to research and apply all that I am finding out.

That passion to learn and study has continued to grow. The more I understand, the more I want to understand.

Having a teachable spirit and enquiring mind means I am constantly learning.

Jesus taught all people. Whoever they were. And he used everyday opportunities to teach and train them to serve and minister to others.

John 8 v31&32 'Jesus said, 'If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth and the truth will set you free.'

Studying His word. Learning about our Saviour will set you free. Jesus is the truth. The perfect standard of what is right. He shows us clearly the way to eternal life with God. As we seek to serve God Jesus' perfect truth frees us to be all that God meant us to be.

Please know that Jesus wants to teach you. He wants to draw you closer to himself. So you can see more glimpses of who is. And that comes by looking at scripture and discussing it.

You could start by using bible notes. There are lots available and a good Christian bookshop will have lots to show you. Christian radio is helpful and of course hearing people preach at New Wine and Spring Harvest.

Lastly, I want to share with you the Kindness of Jesus in this passage.

He asked the disciples what they were arguing about. He knew.

In the garden of Eden, God asks why Adam and Eve were hiding. He knew.

In Mark 10 Jesus asks the blind man, 'What do you want me to do for you?'

He knew.

By the pool at Bethesda Jesus asks the lame man, 'Do you want to get well?' (John 5) He knew.

God wants us to ask Him. Ask him for help. Ask for rescue. Ask for healing. Ask for peace.

Whatever we need. Ask him.

Be honest. Be open and ask. He hears you and knows you.

Mark 11 v24 'Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe you have received it, and it will be yours.'

Philippians 4 v6-7 'Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God which passes all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.'

Psalms 62 v8 'Trust in him at all times, O people; pour out your hearts to him, for God is our refuge'

Let us pray..

Lord, as we seek to know you and draw closer to you, open our eyes and hearts to your word. May your perfect love free us to be who you intend us to be. May we always have a teachable spirit. And as we pour out our hearts to you, may we, by the power of the blood poured out for us, know we are redeemed and crowned with lovingkindness and tender mercies. Amen

Psalms 103 v4

Gilly Robinson