

2020 10 18 *Pentecost 20* A light to my path

Jesus appointed 72 others to go ahead of him to towns and villages. He said, “The harvest is plentiful but the labourers are few, so ask the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers in the harvest.” These were not the first 12 that he sent out; these were the next 70. But now it could be 70 times 70!

“I am sending you out like lambs in the midst of wolves.” They were sent out as evangelists; the Greek word for ‘good news’ is evangel. “Carry no purse, bag or sandals; don’t stop on the way for some distraction.”

“When you are invited into a home, say, ‘Peace to this house. Eat and drink what is provided. If you are welcomed, heal the sick, and say, ‘The kingdom of God has come near you.’ If you are not welcomed, shake the dust off, but still say, ‘The kingdom of God has come near you.’” (Luke 10: 1-9)

In this extraordinary Covid time, God is calling his people to be evangelists. But how can we, when people don’t like to talk about religion? It sounds like a mountain too hard to climb.

However, there are lots of small ways in which everyone can share the good news of God’s love. For instance, instead of saying ‘goodbye’ which means ‘God be with you’, say ‘God bless!’

Or if someone is complaining, instead of suggesting how a person can solve their problems, be a good listener, and then say, “If it’s ok with you, I’ll pray about that.” And then when you pray, pray for them earnestly. God will help them.

And give generously to others; of love, of understanding, or patience (yes, I know that’s hard), on the phone, email or over the hedge. Give to the church and to charities, to the foodbank. In this way Christianity is demonstrated in the hardest times.

Pray regularly for up to 5 people, that God will open a door in their lives to know him. Even if you can’t see anything, thank God for what he is doing in them and for them. He honours our prayers.

Then, to prepare for sharing faith, write out your faith story. If that’s difficult, start with your life story. Everyone’s life is truly interesting - childhood, adolescence, young adulthood, maturity, facing advancing years. Some parts may be painful to remember; how did God help you through? Were there particular people who enabled recovery? Some parts may have been especially joyful. What was, and is the good news of Christ in your life?

(If you can’t write it, you may find drawing it useful; a time-line perhaps, with mountains of joy and depths of sorrow?)

(As a young child I was incredibly lonely, the youngest in the class, and not able to keep up with things. But at Sunday School I learned that Jesus loved me and that he is always with me as a friend. It gave me comfort and strength to go on, and gradually I learned to cope with life. Even now, in the hardest times, I can say that he has never left me and has always provided for me.)

Writing the life story is very helpful in enabling the reality of faith to be clearer, to see the important points that could help others

All of us are part of the priesthood of Christ.

The other reading is

2 Timothy 4: 5-17: ‘As for you, always be sober, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, carry out your calling fully.’

Prayers may include these concerns:

The people of God, that they may proclaim the risen Lord

God's creation that all may care for it

Those in despair and darkness,

that they may find the hope and light of Christ

Those in fear of death, that they may find faith and comfort

Prisoners and captives

Those who are persecuted

Notices:

Sun 18th October

9am Communion at Leamington Hastings (Bk of Common Prayer)

11am Welcome to Worship at Grandborough

Tues 20th Oct at 9.30am Healing Service, CoGS Broadwell

Sun 25th October

9am Flecknoe virtual breakfast service

11am Communion at Willoughby

4pm Afternoon Worship at Leamington Hastings

Interestingly, I did write to our MP Jeremy Wright about the dangers of slavery in our country, with people working so close together to pack meat, etc.

He wrote a very good response with his concerns too, and sent a copy of my letter to the relevant people in Southam who are checking on local businesses.

It really does have an effect when you write to your MP, so do feel free to do this - you have the power as a voter to make your voice heard!

As you know I am retiring at Christmas after the services, and will then be going home to spend time with Dave and rest from my work for a while. I'll write about retiring for the Messenger, which is due for release in November. Many of us have already retired, and it's not an easy experience as you will know. I'd love to hear your experiences!

You can contact me on anne.hinks@outlook.com

or by phone on 01788 438 561, or my mobile 07854 329 892

And finally, sing this, as loud as you like, alone at home!

What a friend we have in Jesus,

all our sins and griefs to bear;

what a privilege to carry

everything to God in prayer.

O, what peace we often forfeit

O, what needless pain we bear;

all because we do not carry

everything to God in prayer.

Have we trials and temptations?

Is there trouble anywhere?

We should never be discouraged

take it to the Lord in prayer.

Can we find a friend so faithful

who will all our sorrows share?

Jesus knows our every weakness

Take it to the Lord in prayer.

Are we weak and heavy laden,

cumbered with a load of care?

Jesus only is our refuge,

take it to the Lord in prayer!

Do thy friends despise, forsake thee?

Take it to the Lord in prayer!

In his arms he'll take and shield thee,

thou wilt find a solace there.

This was written in the 1800s by Joseph Scriven. I believe he penned it when he heard his aunt in America was distraught in bereavement.