



October 10th, 2021

This short act of worship has been prepared for you to use while you are unable to attend worship in a church building.

Call to worship

The invitation is given to every person by Jesus Christ:

"Come to me! Follow me! Be my disciples!"

We come to this place, to this time, at the invitation of Jesus Christ.

Prayers

Creator God, you who love us more than we can know,

Who chose us from the very beginning to be family ,

We praise your holy name.

Jesus Christ, Son of God, Word become flesh;

who dwelt among us and was sacrificed for us,

We praise your holy name.

Holy Spirit, present and power in our lives,

from the moment that we first believed;

We praise your holy name. **Amen**

Now let us take a moment of silence as we make our confession before God.

Silence

Heavenly father, we thank you that through the self-giving love of your son Jesus Christ, we are forgiven, redeemed and restored and our union with you assured. **Amen**

Mark 10:17-31

17 As he was setting out on a journey, a man ran up and knelt before him, and asked him, "Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" 18 Jesus said to him, "Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone. 19 You know the commandments: 'You shall not murder; You shall not commit adultery; You shall not steal; You shall not bear false witness; You shall not defraud; Honor your father and mother.'" 20 He said to him, "Teacher, I have kept all these since my youth." 21 Jesus, looking at him, loved him and said, "You lack one thing; go, sell what you own, and give the money[a] to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me." 22 When he heard this, he was shocked and went away grieving, for he had many possessions.

23 Then Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, "How hard it will be for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God!" 24 And the disciples were perplexed at these words. But Jesus said to them again, "Children, how hard it is [b] to enter the kingdom of God! 25 It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God." 26 They were greatly astounded and said to one another, [c] "Then who can be saved?" 27 Jesus looked at them and said, "For mortals it is impossible, but not for God; for God all things are possible."

28 Peter began to say to him, "Look, we have left everything and followed you." 29 Jesus said, "Truly I tell you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields, for my sake and for the sake of the good news, [d] 30 who will not receive a hundredfold now in this age—houses, brothers and sisters, mothers and children, and fields, with persecutions—and in the age to come eternal life. 31 But many who are first will be last, and the last will be first."

Hymn StF 673 Will you come and Follow me

Will you come and follow me if I but call your name?
Will you go where you don't know and never be the same?
Will you let my love be shown?
Will you let my name be known,

will you let my life be grown in you and you in me?

Will you leave yourself behind if I but call your name?

Will you care for cruel and kind and never be the same?

Will you risk the hostile stare should your life attract or scare?

Will you let me answer prayer in you and you in me?

Will you let the blinded see if I but call your name?

Will you set the prisoners free and never be the same?

Will you kiss the leper clean and do such as this unseen,
and admit to what I mean in you and you in me?

Will you love the "you" you hide if I but call your name?

Will you quell the fear inside and never be the same?

Will you use the faith you've found to reshape the world around,
through my sight and touch and sound in you and you in me?

Lord your summons echoes true when you but call my name.

Let me turn and follow you and never be the same.

In Your company I'll go where Your love and footsteps show.

Thus I'll move and live and grow in you and you in me.

John Bell Graham Maule

Message

I want to begin by sharing with you something about my attempts to learn to play the oboe a few years ago after a friend gifted me her old oboe, having upgraded to a beautiful new one.

I booked some lessons and began the journey of becoming an oboe player with whole hearted enthusiasm. Sadly it didn't last long, once I realised how difficult an instrument it is to play I was dismayed and disheartened and quickly found excuses not to practice. Very soon I became half hearted, I lost the commitment, lacked any intention to see it through and became easily distracted by other things. When I did finally decide to give it up I was hugely relieved.

Maybe you too have had things in your life that didn't get the commitment or attention needed to make a real difference!

In our reading from the Mark's gospel it is this kind of half hearted commitment that Jesus is warning against for those who want to become followers. He is asking for a full hearted commitment if we are really searching for that life changing transformation.

People often express concern about this passage; it appears to be calling followers to give up family and livelihoods and everything they value to follow the call of Christ...surely this cannot be right, can it? But this is not really a call to ditch everything we hold dear...we must not see this as a literal requirement. What Jesus is really calling us to is to be clear and intentional about what comes first.

If we are really seeking the transformational, life changing path that Christ offers then he needs to occupy much more than a mere small corner of our lives when we have a moment or too to fit him in. In fact Christ consciousness is something that must underpin and over arch our entire lives precisely so that *we are* better in our livelihoods and in our family relationships. Indeed quite the contrary to being called away from those things, this new life calls us to be our best selves in the very context of our daily lives amongst our family members, our friends and our colleagues.

It is in whole hearted followership that we grow in grace, in clarity and in a potential to instill hope, to walk humbly and wisely and so herald the Good News simply through who we are in Christ, inhabiting our daily life.

For sure some do feel a vocational call to monastic life that they can give their whole life to this followership. But in truth all of our relationships, whether in marriage or with our kids or friends, or colleagues - in other words, wherever we are in life - that is our monastery, the place where our followership is honed.

What it really boils down to is the quality of our intention and our attention.

Going back to my metaphor of oboe playing, whilst I had a desire to learn to play, it was not on the top of my list of things to do and so for that reason my **Intention** was pretty low...it was more a pipe dream than a conviction (no pun intended). Intention is a powerful energy that moves things up our list of priorities; it enables us to invest in the matter at hand, even when the going gets tough, or we get bored or our energy is low.

Attention is the focus that we give to something. When we pay attention we are listening, watching, waiting, and noticing and being open to the subtle changes as a result of our faithfulness to the practice. Sadly I was so distracted by thoughts about how this instrument wasn't for me, about things

I could be doing rather than spending hours trying to perfect playing a double reed and just general disappointment with myself that the attention required to learn was just not there.

Reflecting on our own levels of intention and attention as disciples of Christ enables us to be much more aware of how these are influencing our christian journey.

There are days when we will be so full of conviction and joy that our attention is really honed and so we find ourselves catching glimpses of God everywhere. Then there are the days when we feel abandoned, it feels as if God is nowhere around us, we are distracted by every passing thought and remaining on the path can be very challenging. It's as if our heart is just not in it. All of this is to be expected and a natural part of the labyrinthine journey. The contemplatives would tell us that the highs and the lows are not important at all but rather it is remaining faithful to the call *regardless* that really enables our spiritual development, and this is where intention and attention are most usefully applied.

For the rich young man we might wonder whether, though seemingly

intentional about keeping the religious commandments, giving his whole heart was too great a challenge. Perhaps too the distractions that can come with establishing and maintaining significant wealth redirected his attention away from the path of true discipleship so that in the end he had to make a choice about which path he preferred to remain faithful to.

To close with, here is a quote from American Pastor Charles Swindol who says this;

‘More than once Jesus deliberately addressed certain issues that quickly diminished the number of onlookers. It was commitment that thinned the ranks’.

Hymn Stf 728

O', God, you search me, and you know me
All my thoughts lie open to your gaze
When I walk or lie down, you are before me,
'Ever the maker and keeper of my days

You know my resting and my rising
You discern my purpose from afar
And with love everlasting, you besiege me,
In ev'ry moment of life or death, you are

Before a word is on my tongue, Lord
You have known its meaning through and through;
You are with me beyond my understanding,
God of my present, my past and future, too.

Although your Spirit is upon me
Still I search for shelter from your light
There is nowhere on Earth I can escape you;
Even the darkness is radiant in your sight.

For you created me and shaped me,
Gave me life within my mother's womb;
For the wonder of who I am I praise you,
Safe in your hands, all creation is made new.

Bernadette Farrell

Prayers

God of our church community, help us to walk in a manner worthy of the calling You have given us. Help us in all our interactions with one another to have humble and gentle hearts. Grant us patience for one another, bearing with one another in love. May we walk humbly with You, God, allowing You to show us our wrongs.

Lord you your Mercy

Hear our Prayer

God of creation and Lord of life, you entrusted us to care for our environment, but in many parts of the world we have failed. Help us to realise how fragile and unstable our surroundings are, because we are not looking after creation. We need to be true stewards and to understand how the most insignificant little flowers, and the tiniest insects, each creature and individual people are all part of a wondrous whole.

Lord in your Mercy

Hear our Prayer

God of this World, we bring before you in silence all those who need our prayers at this time from the stories we have heard on the news to those close to us who need our Prayer.

A time of quiet prayer

We bring these prayers in the name of Jesus who taught us when we pray to say.

Lords Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as

we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. Amen.

Hymn StF 545 Be thou my vision

Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart
be all else but naught to me, save that
thou art;
be thou my best thought in the day
and the night,
both waking and sleeping, thy
presence my light.

Be thou my wisdom, be thou my true
word,
be thou ever with me, and I with thee,
Lord;
be thou my great Father, thy child let
me be;
Thou in me dwelling, and I one with
thee.

Be thou my breastplate, my sword for
the fight;
be thou my whole armour, be thou my
true might;
be thou my souls shelter, be thou my
strong tower:
O raise thou me heavenward, great
Power of my power.

Riches I heed not, nor earth's empty
praise:
be thou mine inheritance now and
always;
be thou and thou only the first in my
heart:
O Sovereign of heaven, my treasure
thou art.

High King of heaven, thou heaven's
bright Sun,
O grant me its joy after victory is won;
Great heart of my own heart, whatever
befall
Still be my vision, O ruler of all.

Blessing

May the love of the Father,
the tenderness of the Son,
and the presence of the Spirit,
gladden your heart
and bring peace to your soul,
this day and all days, Amen.

Worship prepared by Reverend Jayne
Webb.