

St Columba Collingtree, Newsletter 15th November 2020.

As we remain in lockdown, I thought I would update you on what is happening. As you know lockdown is due to end on December 2nd so our next Sunday service in church is due to be on December 6th. When this is confirmed I will plan out what we do in December.

In the mean time we have;

The Zoom Bible Group meets on Tuesday 10.30-12.00 Get in touch if you would like to join so that I can send you the link.

The Church is open for Personal Prayer and Refection on a Wednesday from 10am to 11am during lockdown. Just come along and bring your "Morning Prayer" with you. There are also other prayer sheets in church.

Shoe Boxes

You may be familiar with the practice of sending shoes boxes to Eastern Europe with Christmas gifts in for families. This year St Giles has decided to make shoe boxes and give them to local families in need instead. I have been asked if we would like to join them in this venture. Some could be given to families in our parish if we know of any in need. If you are interested, just let me know. I will let you know more as things develop.

Isaiah's commission Isaiah 6.1-8

6 In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord, high and exalted, seated on a throne; and the train of his robe filled the temple. ² Above him were seraphim, each with six wings: with two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying. ³ And they were calling to one another:

'Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty;
the whole earth is full of his glory.'

⁴ At the sound of their voices the doorposts and thresholds shook and the temple was filled with smoke.

⁵ 'Woe to me!' I cried. 'I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the LORD Almighty.'

⁶ Then one of the seraphim flew to me with a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with tongs from the altar. ⁷ With it he touched my mouth and said, 'See, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for.'

⁸ Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, 'Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?'

And I said, 'Here am I. Send me!'

Psalm 141

A psalm of David.

- ¹ I call to you, LORD, come quickly to me;
hear me when I call to you.
- ² May my prayer be set before you like incense;
may the lifting up of my hands be like the evening sacrifice.
- ³ Set a guard over my mouth, LORD;
keep watch over the door of my lips.
- ⁴ Do not let my heart be drawn to what is evil
so that I take part in wicked deeds
along with those who are evildoers;
do not let me eat their delicacies.
- ⁵ Let a righteous man strike me – that is a kindness;
let him rebuke me – that is oil on my head.
My head will not refuse it,
for my prayer will still be against the deeds of evildoers.
- ⁶ Their rulers will be thrown down from the cliffs,
and the wicked will learn that my words were well spoken.
- ⁷ They will say, 'As one ploughs and breaks up the earth,
so our bones have been scattered at the mouth of the grave.'
- ⁸ But my eyes are fixed on you, Sovereign LORD;
in you I take refuge – do not give me over to death.
- ⁹ Keep me safe from the traps set by evildoers,
from the snares they have laid for me.
- ¹⁰ Let the wicked fall into their own nets,
while I pass by in safety.

Matthew 9.9-13

The calling of Matthew

⁹ As Jesus went on from there, he saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax collector's booth. 'Follow me,' he told him, and Matthew got up and followed him.

¹⁰ While Jesus was having dinner at Matthew's house, many tax collectors and sinners came and ate with him and his disciples. ¹¹ When the Pharisees saw this, they asked his disciples, 'Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?'

¹² On hearing this, Jesus said, 'It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but those who are ill. ¹³ But go and learn what this means: "I desire mercy, not sacrifice."^[a] For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners.'

Comment.

Over the last few weeks we have been looking at how we grow in faith. How are we to grow in Christ? How do we become more like Him? Our readings, from the Old and New Testament, both talking about calling. The first is the famous story of the calling of Isaiah. Isaiah was aware of his unworthiness and yet he heard the call of God. When he heard God say "Whom shall I send" he said, "Here I am, send me." In other words he made a decision to follow God. It was a decision that changed His whole life as he became the most well know of all the prophets of God.

In the Matthew reading, we see something similar happening; Jesus says to Matthew, "Come, follow me" and Matthew obeyed him and he of cause became a close follower of Jesus. Later on, he was chosen to be one of the twelve, an apostle. One thing I have found over the years is that many people attend church, often for years, but never actually decide to follow Jesus. For Jesus wants to say to every one of us, "come follow me." Both Isaiah and Matthew made a decision to follow.

The point I am making is that growing in faith is not automatic. Growing up in the Christian church is a decision that we make. Nothing shapes our lives more than the commitments that we make. Tell me what you are committed to and I will tell you what you will become. OK that perhaps applies more to young people looking into the future but it is still true of anyone at any age. We become what we are committed to.

Commitment is a dirty word these days. So often people want to keep their options open and drift through life. Some make half-hearted commitments to competing values, which can only lead to frustration. Still others make a commitment to worldly goals like becoming rich and famous and end up disappointed. We would all do well

to remember that every choice we make has a corresponding consequence; what are you committed to?

If you want to grow as a disciple, then you must make a decision to grow. Roy Castle used to sing a song about dedication. It basically said, if you want to be a record breaker it takes dedication. He was right of course. If we want to grow as Christians it will take dedication too. Those we do will reap the reward of God's blessing. There is real joy in growing in faith and taking your part in the Christian community.

Collect for today.

Heavenly Father,
You long for the world's salvation:
Stir us from apathy,
Restrain us from excess
And revive in us new hope
That all creation will one day be healed
In Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.