

Henley-in-Arden Baptist Church
“Staying Connected” 22 – Sunday 16th August 2020

Staying connected to God and each other while not meeting as church in the normal way

Being a Christian is being a disciple (follower or learner or apprentice) of Jesus. I wonder, do you see yourself in that way. We all have much to learn from the Master.

This week we look at the calling of the 12 apostles.

Luke 6:12-16

¹² One of those days Jesus went out to a mountainside to pray; and spent the night praying to God. ¹³ When morning came, he called his disciples to him and chose twelve of them, whom he also designated apostles: ¹⁴ Simon (whom he named Peter), his brother Andrew, James, John, Philip, Bartholomew, ¹⁵ Matthew, Thomas, James son of Alphaeus, Simon who was called the Zealot, ¹⁶ Judas son of James, and Judas Iscariot, who became a traitor.

The accounts in Matthew and Mark are similar; but in John’s gospel the emphasis is quite different, and the focus is more on their individual encounters and their gradual dawning as Jesus’ identity as the Messiah (Saviour) – though there is lots of that in the other gospels too.

Andrew is evangelistic from the start:

John 1:40-42

⁴⁰ Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother, was one of the two who heard what John had said and who had followed Jesus. ⁴¹ The first thing Andrew did was to find his brother Simon and tell him, ‘We have found the Messiah’ (that is, the Christ). ⁴² And he brought him to Jesus.

What is fascinating is that these folk were a somewhat peculiar mix: a motley crew! But isn’t it encouraging that Jesus chooses ordinary people – like you and me – to be part of His team! And He’s going to be training them to continue His work – his work of teaching, healing, and caring for others.



This picture is an interpretation of Jesus teaching the disciples. There are clearly more than 12 here, as would have been likely in some settings of course. There is no social distancing, technically, but it looks quite nice outdoors!

Lord God, our heavenly Father, we praise You for the treasure of the gospel message we have received – the good news of eternal life in Your Son. Help us, by Your Spirit, to share that treasure, in word and action – and inspire us to pray.

Lord, there are times when we ourselves are struggling – along with others – Where we at a loss to make sense of our circumstances; where we have cried out to You for a hurting world... Loving and merciful God, we thank You that we don't always need answers, because in You we have the gift of Yourself. You understand 'hurting', and Your love is stronger than death. Draw near to us and those on our hearts, we pray.

We pray for the people of Lebanon in their time of crisis. We pray for the thousands who are suffering directly as a result of the recent explosion. And we pray for peace and stability, and wise and compassionate leadership. Lord in Your mercy, hear our prayer.

We pray for those experiencing the economic impact of the pandemic in terms of job insecurity, or lack of work... bring hope and peace to bear, we pray – and we pray for mitigation of need.

And for the church. May we capture Your vision for the church in these times. Encourage us with the hope of the gospel; and in the uncertainty, may we know Your peace for ourselves. Fill us anew with Your Spirit, that the qualities of love, joy and peace may be spread deeply and widely – for Your glory.

[Spend some time in silent prayer – allowing God to minister to You as you are...] Thank You, Lord, for Your love and care.

We bring our prayer in Jesus' name
Amen

Quiz question:

Which of the four gospels is the shortest, and which is the longest?

Answer next week

Answer to last week's quiz question:

40

For those not online, especially:

Worship services on radio and TV this Sunday include:

- Radio 4 8:10am Sunday Worship
- BBC1 1:15pm Songs of Praise

And finally, please do get in touch with me at any time

May God bless you with His peace.

“Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable – if anything is excellent or praiseworthy – think about such things.” (Philippians 4:8)

Mike

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