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**Printed material for Sunday 24th October 2021**

**compiled by David Ward (Over Methodist Church)**

Whatever we have been doing, wherever we are, let us put aside the matters of the world, the things that fill our minds and skew our priorities, while we focus on Jesus teachings as we come to worship God. As we reflect on the words of scripture, sing (or listen to) song and pray - let’s try to not think about who we are, what we’ve done; the things that define us in this world and instead hear Jesus teaching, the true message for us and with the strength of the spirit see what God is speaking into our lives in this moment. Let us lift our hands, minds and voices to the one who was is and always will be. Amen.

**Hymn**: StF 20 (SoF:40 MP:50) [Be still for the presence of the Lord](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZugvUQ4m90U)

**Prayers:** Father, almighty God, your power and strength leave us in awe. We are humbled by your Glory and the glimpse of the kingdom we see, not because of who we are but because of who you are. Your unquestioned support and unconditional love are such a contrast to what we experience in life that our sight is veiled by darkness. You lift us in your infinite grace from the dark and into the light of hope, you bring us purpose and salvation. Full us with your spirit and remind us of your presence in our lives as we move through our earthly journey towards your kingdom.
We give you rightful thanks for the experiences we experience in your creation. Let us think of the joys and the sorrows, the things that have brought us happiness and the times that we have feared. We recognise that you, our Father are working through all of these moments to add to our growth in life, and are touching us in your unique healing way and we praise you.

We accept our place in the world and our contribution to the despair and darkness. We know that we are distracted by worldly greatness, by power and control. We know that we impose the division of wealth on others who seek you and we consider less worthy. We know that we get in our own way, turning to expectations and our vision of wealth to re-assure and comfort ourselves. We do these things, forgetting that Jesus sacrifice ensures our sins are forgiven and that you will not remember them. Help us to not remember our sins, to look beyond the past and grasp the new life that you have given us without shame, or reluctance to come to you as we offer our voice to those we would otherwise think not worthy to help them to come to the covenant of forgiveness and freedom. Our lives have been cleansed by your grace, we are free, free to walk in the light of faith in Jesus Christ. Amen.

**Close prayer with** [**Psalm (34:1-8&19-22)**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm%2034%3A1-8%2CPsalm%2034%3A19-22&version=NIVUK) **& The Lord’s Prayer** (I listened to the Hillsong available [here](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nCxqjEz5hJ4))

**Hymn**: StF:397 (SoF:1555 MP 664) [The spirit lives to set us free](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8CumpuwbWv4) or [This little light of mine](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QCN893hzueQ)

**Readings**: [**Mark 10:46-52**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Mark+10%3A46-52&version=NIVUK) **,** [**Exodous 3:1-14**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Exodus+3%3A1-14&version=NIVUK)There is an animated version of the gospel reading [here](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rsyYuUeAMVw)

**Message:** When you look at the image to the right, what do you see?

There are disposable food containers but do they appear upside down or the right way up to you? (hint: they are all upside down other than a couple that are the right way up). The minute you see the odd ones, all the others appear to flip over – or at least that’s how it’s supposed to work! If you can’t see it, it might help to look away and back it or turn the page around.

The thing that struck me the first time I looked at it was how sure I was that they were ALL upside down. A similar phenomenon is the trivia you may have heard of that in order to read something only the first and last letter needs to be correct:

*“it deosn't mttaer in waht oredr the ltteers in a wrod are, the olny iprmoetnt tihng is taht the frist and lsat ltteer be at the rghit pclae. The rset can be a toatl mses and you can sitll raed it wouthit porbelm.”*

I am told by my more intelligent friends that it isn’t quite a true description, it’s a more complicated linguistic phenomena and there is a (tongue-in-cheek) name for it “Typoglycaemia” if you want to look it up, but it works because we don’t rely on only what we see but what we **expect** to see.

In the gospel reading today there are a lot of expectations, the blind man is expected to sit at the gates begging for what he can get as the only contribution he can make to those caring for him, as all disabled people would be expected to do. Those following Jesus expect that Jesus has much more important people to see and things to do (he’s on his way to Jerusalem and the last week of his life) than be bothering with a blind man, and the blind man hopes that Jesus will heal him. All of these expectations turn out to be wrong however. Jesus is most interested in the man, he can see more clearly than those with worldly sight who Jesus really is, the followers of Jesus are clouded by their worldly expectations of position and status that they try to block the man from Jesus and it’s the mans faith heals him. Like the Typoglycaemia and the picture we looked at, expectations so easily can lead to the wrong conclusions and we need to be wary about what it is that we see, and if our life expectations or pre-conceptions are guiding us to the wrong answer. To us, reading Mark with the benefit of hindsight, and even perhaps in light of the previous verses from last weeks lectionary (vs 35-45) on the expectation of James and John of rewards in the kingdom from status on earth, and the rich man’s challenges in verses 17-31 we might judge those who were there unfairly for not having recognised Jesus message, despite the fact he has seemingly repeated it many times! Do we silence people who we think are of no use to the church, those who can’t contribute, have no money, power or influence? – hopefully not intentionally but do we do it unintentionally by making an unwelcoming environment for those we might see as a liability?

One of the things that surprises me in the passage is Bartimaeus enthusiasm when he is called by Jesus. He throws of his cloak and rushes to follow as fast as he can. Contrast that with the OT reading and Moses reaction when he is called he is ready with many reasons why he isn’t right for the job, “why would Pharaoh listen to me?”, “I don’t even know who you are?” and then in following verses says he’s not a great speaker, his brother would be better for the job etc. How do we react when we are called? I like to think that when I am called I jump to it like Bartimaeus, but I’m sure I don’t, I am concerned with the consequences and convenience for myself – I think this is the most frequent request in my prayers for God to make the call clear and loud so that as Moses does eventually, I jump to it and follow the call!

At the end of the passage Bartimaeus is healed not by Jesus touch but after Jesus asks him what he wants, and he puts his request plainly and simply to Jesus, tells him what he wants, then he is healed by his faith. That faith allows him to follow Jesus without knowing where he is going, and that is all Jesus asks of him and of us all. While we worry about status, power, wealth and worth, Jesus never has inventory of those things. Jesus only asks will you follow me?

This week we have heard of the murder of Sir David Amess, you might have heard one of the people giving testimony about his life on the today program on radio 4, commenting on how he took up the cause of those suffering endometriosis, something he knew nothing about previously, they said that “he didn’t have any expectation or desire for personal enrichment but took up the cause of the underdog, those without a voice”. I see Jesus giving a message of great equality in todays scripture, one where all are children of God and equal in his eyes and we should show the same equality in welcoming anyone who calls Jesus name. We fail sometimes, putting ourselves first or simply ignoring the call because its inconvenient or seems unworthy of our time but are called back through God’s grace just as Moses was. Let us look this week for the opportunity around us to be the one to champion a cause for someone else as we walk the path, following Jesus without knowing quite where we are going.

**Hymn:** StF:673(SoF:1120)[**Will you come and follow me if I but call your name**](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eAYM8pWCwWk)

**Intercessions:** Father hear our prayer as we discern your call, make us hear those who call Jesus name and welcome them to your church. We lift in prayer a world which is experiencing so much hatred, we think of those who are afraid of violence and hatred focussed at them, let the spirit be their strength and shield. Be with those who direct their anger and frustrations at others, help us to find them and bring them the message of peace and hope, let them find the right ways to call out for the help they need so that they feel the love and light of Jesus shining upon them. We pray for those who are grieving and have lost loved ones, those who are suffering illness and the families and support that are around them, be with them, bring them hope and resilience, safe in your eternal loving arms. Enable us to be better examples and do the work to build your kingdom here and now in Jesus name. Amen.

**Hymn:** StF:364 (H&P:744 SoF:412 MP:496)[**O for a thousand tongues to sing**](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CFJvBwgmK_c)

It is time to return to the world around us, refreshed in the word of the works of Jesus. May we put our experience into practice, be ready for the call, strong in spirit to welcome all those who call Jesus name into friendship and fellowship. Amen