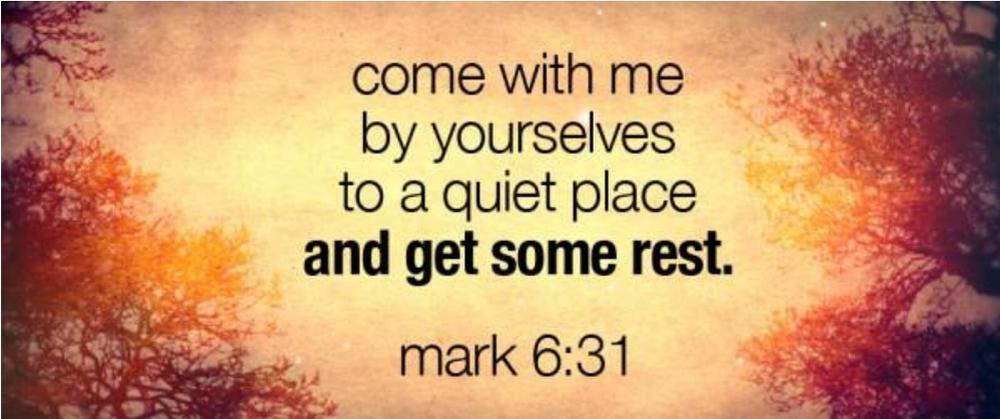


Ardoch and Blackford Parish Churches

Sunday 18th July 2021



come with me
by yourselves
to a quiet place
and get some rest.

mark 6:31

This week the disciples have come back from their mission programme which they set out on a fortnight ago. Jesus wants to take them off for a rest—just as a shepherd looks after his sheep. Instead things get busier. Before we get too busy let's focus on God as we say the Lord's 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 debts, as we forgive our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen

We have two Scripture passages today, read by Dorothy Johnson. Firstly in the service we'll watch and listen to Becky George as she signs Psalm 23 in Makaton.

¹ The LORD is my shepherd, I lack nothing.

² He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, ³ he refreshes my soul.

He guides me along the right paths for his name's sake.

⁴ Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.

⁵ You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.

⁶ Surely your goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life,

and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.

Then we'll have these verses from Mark chapter 6 read as well.

³⁰ The apostles gathered round Jesus and reported to him all they had done and taught. ³¹ Then, because so many people were coming and going that they did not even have a chance to eat, he said to them, 'Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest.'

³² So they went away by themselves in a boat to a solitary place. ³³ But many who saw them leaving recognised them and ran on foot from all the towns and got there ahead of them. ³⁴ When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. So he began teaching them many things.

⁵³ When they had crossed over, they landed at Gennesaret and anchored there. ⁵⁴ As soon as they got out of the boat, people recognised Jesus. ⁵⁵ They ran throughout that whole region and carried those who were ill on mats to wherever they heard he was. ⁵⁶ And wherever he went – into villages, towns or countryside – they placed those who were ill in the market-places. They begged him to let them touch even the edge of his cloak, and all who touched it were healed.

**Our first hymn was written in Scotland by the Wild Goose
Resource Group of worship leaders:**

Jesus Christ is waiting, Waiting in the streets;
No one is his neighbour, All alone he eats.
Listen, Lord Jesus, I am lonely too.
Make me, friend or stranger, Fit to wait on you

Jesus Christ is raging, Raging in the streets,
Where injustice spirals And real hope retreats.
Listen, Lord Jesus, I am angry too.
In the Kingdom's causes Let me rage with you.

Jesus Christ is healing, Healing in the streets;
Curing those who suffer, Touching those he greets.
Listen, Lord Jesus, I have pity too.
Let my care be active, Healing just like you.

Jesus Christ is dancing, Dancing in the streets,
Where each sign of hatred He, with love, defeats.
Listen, Lord Jesus, I should triumph too.
Where good conquers evil Let me dance with you.

Jesus Christ is calling, Calling in the streets,
"Who will join my journey? I will guide their feet."
Listen, Lord Jesus, Let my fears be few.
Walk one step before me; I will follow you.
Words and Music Graham Maule, John L. Bell
©1988 WGRG, Iona Community, Glasgow

We approach God in prayer and in confession

O God You know each of us well, love us deeply and are able to sustain us in an enormous variety of ways. We are humbled by our awareness of Your profound concern and involvement in our petty concerns and worries, and your keen interest in our welfare.

Given so many gifts in our daily lives to enrich us and opportunities for love and companionship, we come anticipating a deeper appreciation of and wider perspective of Your grace and power.

We know Your mercy for the penitent, O loving God. Let us experience it once again as we place the record of our past week before You. We recall our lack of respect and care for others and those set in authority over us. We acknowledged our abuse and neglect of our particular talents and gifts.

We have lived as if the world and its wonders were under our control and needed no reference to You. We have failed to measure up to the standard expected of Your disciples, and our example has not influenced the world for good. In certain ways we have lived as if this earth and life upon it was the limit of our horizons and have disregarded Your encouragement to strive forward and live as mature human beings made in Your likeness. Hear us, O God, as in silence we now come to you to say sorry and ask for your forgiveness.

Lord in your love and grace and mercy hear our prayers, Amen

Our next hymn points us to Christ.

Meekness and majesty, manhood and Deity,
In perfect harmony, the Man who is God.
Lord of eternity dwells in humanity,
Kneels in humility and washes our feet.

O what a mystery, Meekness and majesty.
Bow down and worship For this is your God, This is your God.

Father's pure radiance, perfect in innocence,
Yet learns obedience to death on a cross.
Suffering to give us life, conquering through sacrifice,
And as they crucify prays: 'Father forgive.'

Wisdom unsearchable, God the invisible,
Love indestructible in frailty appears.
Lord of infinity, stooping so tenderly,
Lifts our humanity to the heights of His throne.

Words & Music Graham Kendrick © 1986 Thankyou Music

A reflection on our Bible readings

It's the compassion of the shepherd that joins our readings together this week. Psalm 23 is well known as a reference point for expressing faith in the Lord as MY shepherd. It's not just a title he carries, it's a relationship that he offers.

Our reading from Mark refers to Jesu seeing the crown and "he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd." It's a bit of editorial added by Mark, perhaps noted by Simon Peter who was probably Mark's source for writing down those parts he'd not been there for. Perhaps Jesus talked them through with the disciples afterwards, or perhaps it was just the look in Jesus' eye when he saw the crowd.

Look closely at the verse numbers from our reading and you'll see that we missed a bit out in the middle—the bit when Jesus feeds the 5,000! As the only miracle bar the resurrection that all four Gospel writers include, it's a significant miracle, but we look at it when Matthew's account comes around in the lectionary. Today we take out the miracle and focus on the compassion of Jesus.

- 1) For his disciples, or notice that they are called apostles today rather than disciples—representatives rather than learners. They need a rest and Jesu takes them away with that in mind until the crowds got there first. Perhaps they got a break while Jesus was teaching. Either way, it's Good advice to then—and to us in Jesus;' invitation. "Come apart and rest awhile"...before you just come apart anyway!
- 2) Secondly for the crowd who ran from one thing to another, grazing on what they could find, susceptible to danger and needing a shepherd. So Jesus taught them - and he taught them many things

(v34). As elsewhere, (e.g. Mark 1V38) until his sacrificial death, his reason for coming was to preach and teach. It's the same for us. Jesus heart of compassion means that he wants to see us taught and our spiritual lives growing. The physical needs can often come second.

3) Thirdly, after feeding and sending off the crowd, Jesus caught up with the disciples by walking out onto the water to meet them and calming the storm as he got into the boat. We save that bit as well for another day but the crowds on that side of the lake also want their time with Jesus. There's no sign of teaching, almost just a superstitious response about touching Jesus' cloak—perhaps they'd heard about the woman who'd been healed alongside Jairus's daughter—or they'd read Malachi 4:2)

And what of us? Are we taking up Jesus' invitation to rest with him, each day, each week? Have we accepted him as our shepherd and put your life in his hands? Are you rejoicing in his compassion that wants to teach you to be more like him? Or are you only reaching out to him when you want something or need something like the last group. There's so much more Jesus wants to give that that.

Prayers for others

Generous provider of every good gift, prod us awake to the opportunities and invitations You lay before us. Give us humility in defeat and denial, so that we may trust You rather than our own wisdom. Give to those who lead, the loyalty and support they deserve, and to those who follow, willing spirits and a sense of purpose of their part in Your plan for this world.

Almighty God, we give You thanks for all who have given their lives and talents in the service of others; those whose religious zeal, commitment to truth, leadership ability and qualities of service have enabled others to live more freely and fully and brought new harmony and understanding to the world.

For all those whose faithful witness has challenged the prejudices and closed minds of others and enabled people to appreciate the power of Your love in their lives.

We praise You for those who can allow another to take the lead where appropriate and encourage others by their example and concern for the good of the community, rather than their own selfish interest and reputation.

For all who have lifted the standards of behaviour, the moral and ethical codes, and have been dissatisfied with slovenly or slapdash efforts and careless attitudes to important tasks, we glorify Your name.

Especially for Jesus Christ, we are grateful and how His life and example has illuminated and inspired our lives and pushed out the limited horizons of our thinking and challenged our systems of values and called us to look onward and upward towards You.

Intercession

Great and Loving God, we know we are tenants of this good earth, entrusted through Your grace and love with its abundance and harvests. Strengthen our resolve to be worthy of Your covenant with us, and make us more willing to hear, to obey, and to act in protection of the fruit of Your kingdom of love. Fill the leaders of our nation, and all nations, with a healthy respect for the dignity of human life, the worth of the individual and the need to consider the everyday issues as well as the wider issues in politics and society.

Sustain those with special talents – of laughter, healing, teaching, leadership, parenting, production of food and necessities of life – and encourage them to see You as the source of all their gifts.

Accept we pray Your children, with their particular hopes and promise. Inspire them to continue in their faithful way to work for the growth of love and cooperation, mutual dependence and trust. Startle the wavering and the tempted, the unsure and the procrastinating with a sharp sense of Your interest and Your demands of care upon them. Refresh the weary and the war-torn, the oppressed and the suffering with the sense of Your unlimited and unexpected mercies.

Motivate the hearts of compassionate men and women to the cries of the hungry and the plight of the undernourished. Shake the complacent out of their stupor of self-satisfaction, and grab their attention and stimulate them to action on behalf of those with no 'clout', or no political weight, and no means of being heard for themselves.

Give patience to those who labour to alter the ideas of society and challenge the patterns of the growing gap between rich and poor.

Direct and embolden those who grapple with the problems of insufficient shelter and inadequate clothing, the lack of ample resources in education, and abuse of power, oppression and injustice.

Re-ignite the passion of those who have slumped into idle lethargy and lukewarm apathy. Give them a boldness to correct, eradicate and transform the wrongs which reject and isolate those who do not fit neatly within the norms of society.

Remind the Church to tread carefully in its eagerness to be popular with the world. Challenge us when we are silent on controversial issues, when our silence condones the destruction and rejection of goodness, truth and life.

Stir up within our Church a passion for the Gospel and the building of God's kingdom. Guide it in the deep waters of social and political action so it may hold tight to spiritual truth in the teaching of Jesus, in whose name we pray. Amen

In our final hymn, God speaks in the verses and we respond in the choruses.

I, the Lord of sea and sky, I have heard My people cry.

All who dwell in dark and sin, My hand will save.

I who made the stars of night, I will make their darkness bright.

Who will bear My light to them? Whom shall I send?

Here I am Lord, Is it I Lord? I have heard You calling in the night. I will go Lord, if You lead me. I will hold Your people in my heart.

I, the Lord of snow and rain, I have born my peoples pain.

I have wept for love of them, They turn away.

I will break their hearts of stone, Give them hearts for love alone.

I will speak My word to them, Whom shall I send?

I, the Lord of wind and flame I will tend the poor and lame.

I will set a feast for them, my hand will save.

Finest bread I will provide, till their hearts be satisfied

I will give my life to them; whom shall I send?

Words and Music: Anna Laura Page, Daniel Schutte © Jubilate Music

Blessing

Now let us continue to rest in the presence of our loving Father, of the compassionate Christ, and of the fruitful Spirit. Amen.

Intimations

- If you are not able to join us in either of the church buildings, the 10:00am service from Ardoch is livestreamed on both church websites and edited to view on the Ardoch site thereafter.
- Since the new one meter distancing is starting on Monday 19th July, it will not be necessary to book a seat for the service on the 25th July but please continue to wear masks.
- Ardoch Health & Safety team will be meeting early next week to finalise seating arrangements and will try to accommodate everyone's needs. Check the website for more details later in the week.
- Rev Mairi will be on holiday from Monday 26th July until Monday 9th August. The Sunday Services on the 1st and 8th August will be lead by Gordon Roy. For any Pastoral emergencies please contact the Session Clerk. Tel 01786 880947.

The Ardoch Holiday Club

We have a good number of children enrolled for this week's Holiday Club. Jungle Adventure will take us on a journey of discovering Jesus through the eyes of his disciples, who were called by him and experienced first hand Jesus' care, provision, and deep friendship.

We plan to do as much as possible out of doors, like we were with the Hot Chocolate Group a few weeks ago, so you may see us in sunhats or wellies!

Monday:	Jesus calls the disciples	Matthew 4	Jesus calls
Tuesday:	The wise and foolish builders	Matthew 7	Jesus guides
Wednesday:	Jesus calms the storm	Matthew 8	Jesus cares
Thursday:	The feeding of the 5,000	Matthew 14	Jesus provides
Friday:	Zacchaeus	Luke 19	Jesus' friendship

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