



As I was preparing my sermon for this week, I thought Mmmmm, this reading is a little difficult, where do I start? So I said to Jesus, I don't really want to preach on this passage, and Jesus said, "Well, we can do it together." So I said to Jesus, "Na, I don't want to do this one." And Jesus said, "Come on, we can do it together." And I said to Jesus, "No, you don't understand how I feel about this." As soon as I said this, I wanted to shove the words right back into my mouth! Of course Jesus knows how I feel, he knows all about us, our thoughts, our fears, our joys, he knows everything about us.

I then remembered the reading from Jeremiah a couple of weeks ago; "Then the Lord reached out his hand and touched my mouth and said to me, I have put my words into your mouth." Alleluia. so Jesus may have put words into my mouth, but I don't know how they will come out!!

We always need to take care not to interpret the scriptures to suit ourselves, as we try to make sense of these words, just as in Jesus' day, and in OT days, humans are always wanting to understand the meaning of everything, however this is not always possible. There are elements of our faith, our journey with Jesus that we can never understand until our journey is finished, and then we can bombard Jesus with the list of questions that we carry around in our heads!!

Jesus introduces a difficult truth in this Gospel passage; following Him is a costly commitment, not a cheap one. Jesus states that to be his disciple, one must hate, (or love less than Jesus) our family, including our spouse, children, brothers and sisters, and even our own life. This does not mean despising our loved ones but rather a comparative love where loyalty to Jesus is paramount. Those who are truly disciples of Jesus are willing to lose health, wealth, reputation and family for the sake of the kingdom of God. Jesus often exaggerated a message to enable followers to understand His message.

Everything you are and everything you have, including family and friends are to be put under the lordship of Jesus. For me, this is a wonderful thing, to entrust all I have to

Jesus. It is a great relief to know that my family and friends are always in God's loving care.

I was recently talking to a friend whose husband has concerning health issues. I can see how calm and relaxed they are about the whole situation, they truly commit the whole process to Jesus, they know that they will be supported and encouraged no matter what happens, this is an amazing inspiration to us all. They trust and obey, knowing that they will never be deserted by our loving Heavenly Father.

I'm sure they have their moments of questioning and worry, that is what we do as humans, but they know they have hope and can trust in the loving care of our Lord.

One morning last week as we read Jesus Calling the message for 1<sup>st</sup> September was;

"Seek me with your whole being. I desire to be found by you, and I orchestrate the events of your life with that purpose in mind. When things go well and you are blessed, you can feel Me smiling on you. When you encounter rough patches along your life journey, trust that My light is still shining upon you. These adversities may be shrouded in mystery, why has this happened? we say, but Jesus says, My continual presence with you is an absolute promise. Seek me in good times, seek Me in hard times. You will find Me watching over you all the time."

I found them to be such comforting words of hope and encouragement.

To truly follow Jesus Christ we must consider the cost and put Him above everything else. My understanding is that the massive development that now occupies the old golf club site here in Morisset, is a classic example of a person or people that have not thoroughly sat down and estimated the cost to ensure that they have enough money to complete the structure, the same as the example given in verse 28, 29 and 30 of our Gospel reading today. The person building the tower, we also must be sure that we fully understand this commitment that we will make to our Lord and Saviour, so that we can fulfil this commitment and remain faithful as we continue on our journey with Jesus. If we are to give our lives to Jesus we must consider the cost and decide if we are prepared to accept this great gift which demands our all.

Being a disciple of Jesus is a free gift, and when we accept His salvation, His generous and unconditional love, His healing powers and His care for us, we also commit ourselves to Him. We trust and obey, we listen to Jesus as he calls us into life with Him.

We might think how can all this be called freedom as we give ourselves to God. However as I said earlier, it is for me a true sense of freedom as we can commit our most treasured possessions into the care of our Lord, we have a companion on our life's journey and beyond, who will never let us down. Always be aware, Jesus is everywhere, take time to notice him and you will be blessed indeed.

This doesn't mean that our life will be perfect, there will always be difficult experiences, hardships that we will endure, but if God is for us, who can be against us? The Lord will always provide care, love and support through these troubled times, He will send His many Angels to minister to us.

I visited a woman last week to take communion to her, she suffers with severe pain almost continually. One night she asked God to please give her a few hours' sleep, she was desperate and He did. She didn't necessarily ask for healing, she just wanted some relief and there it was, this doesn't mean that we shouldn't ask for healing, but it does depend on the situation, we mustn't be disappointed when we are not healed in the way we imagine, we will be healed and restored to God's glory when the time is right.

We need to focus on the blessings that we do receive from God; day by day he will keep us in His loving care no matter what happens, He is always with us.

Let us conclude in prayer.

Generous and loving God, we give you thanks for the many blessings we receive, daily and abundantly. We pray that you will help us to follow you with real commitment, You understand our human frailty as you came to earth and lived as one of us, we pray that you will share your divinity with us, so that we may always trust and obey you as we set our sights on Your heavenly kingdom here on earth and beyond. Teach us the joys of your salvation, Your love and Your care for us and equip us to spread these blessing through our community, in your Precious name.

AMEN