

Home Service 24/10/21

Let all who believe in Jesus' name gather now.
Come from the places that shape you.
Leave the learning that shapes your opinions.
Leave the institutions that shape the boxes in which you live.
Have courage to leave, and gather;
gather here before the living God,
to have your thinking reshaped.
Teach us, Lord Jesus; we wait to learn from you. Amen.

You call us to come close to you, Lord.
We come, assured of our welcome,
but do we hold others back?
Maybe they don't agree with us entirely:
we certainly don't agree with them.
Perhaps their faces don't fit.
Yet how can we approach you when we deter others?
In raising barriers against them,
we cut ourselves off from you.
We lay down our defences, Lord.
We set aside our defensiveness.
Welcome us in your open embrace. Amen.

Please read Mark 9.38-42

Is there only one approved way to follow Jesus?
I've been lucky enough to meet so many different people who have a different approach to following our Lord.

We're not told who the individual is that is operating 'in Jesus' name' but we are told that he was 'casting out demons' : healing. This is a question that still bothers some of our congregations today: spiritual healing techniques that seem to work but which are not overtly Christian such as Reiki, Sound Frequency Healing or Acupuncture.

In response to this, Jesus points out that whoever is not against us is for us (v.40). And that leads to another question about how people who might otherwise follow Jesus might be prevented from doing so by the insistence that our way is the only way and the right way?

There is an underlying message here that discipleship is a much more serious business than just grumbling about other people because they're not doing

things the way we do them. We need to be careful about any barriers that we put in the way of those who might wish to express their spirituality in ways that are different from our preferred terms. These stumbling-blocks may actually impede our own healing.

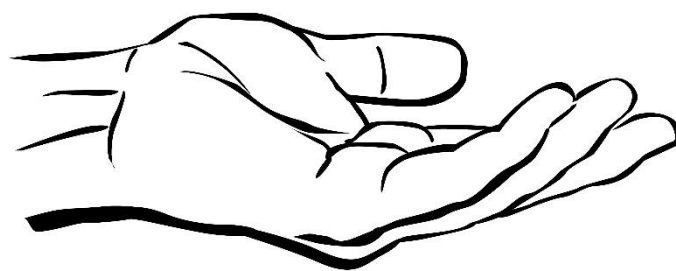
We pray...

We are good at telling tales, Lord,
in the pretence of concern for you.
We report what others do that we think is not right.
Many times, our noses are out of joint.
Their way is not our way.
We think we should control such actions:
they did not have our permission;
we may even envy their success.
And so, Lord, we confess our tunnel vision.
Help us to see with your eyes. Show us the big picture.
Help us to encourage good works,
and not put obstacles in the way of those who perform them. Amen.

Thank you, Lord, for your arms open in welcome.
Thank you, Lord, for your door open in invitation.
Thank you, Lord, for your heart open in expectation.
Praise be to you for being open to us, for not putting obstacles in our way.
Praise be for the wisdom and love of inclusiveness. Amen.

Sending out prayer

Go out into the world
and share the good news.
Do not withhold it from any.
Go out into the world
and praise good works.
Do not look down upon any good.
Go out into the world
with open hearts and open minds,
welcoming all who are open to Jesus. Amen.



Suggested Music

Guide me, O thou great redeemer www.youtube.com/watch?v=5j48TLIRb4Q
Purify my heart www.youtube.com/watch?v=zkgJHUJIKVM
There's a wideness in God's mercy www.youtube.com/watch?v=kamADrIPEDs
Heal (Tom Odell) www.youtube.com/watch?v=55RVS3MW2aQ