



Billericay **Methodist** Church 
Queens Park, Western Road & Herongate

Sunday 26th June 2022
10.30am

'Pilgrimage'

With grateful thanks to Twelve Baskets for permission to use materials from 'The Vine at Home'.

Music beforehand :

Trust Reflection/ The UK blessing / To be in Your presence

Welcome

Opening Prayer

God of each moment, we give to you this moment of prayer at the start of our service,

We bring to you all that we are,

All that we feel,

All that we think.

Move in our hearts and minds today.

God of each hour, we give to you our time of worship this day.

Use this space to fill us again with your love,

That we might be champions of love in the world around us,

And that we might sing your praises.

Move in our hearts and minds today.

God of each day, we give to you this day,
The opportunities that will arise to share your good news with the people we meet,
The failures we are already aware of, or live in fear of.
Forgive us for our failings this day, Lord God,
Move in our hearts and minds, by your grace.

God of each year, we give to you this year,
The days and weeks to come,
The hopes and anxieties we hold in our hearts.
Even as we thank you for all that we have received,
We look to trust you for all that is to come.
Be the way maker for us today, O God,
And move in our hearts and minds,
By your Spirit. **Amen.**

Prayer by Tim Baker

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 trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation;
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
the power, and the glory
for ever and ever. **Amen.**

Hymn - Praise my soul the king of Heaven

Praise, my soul, the King of heaven;
To His feet thy tribute bring.
Ransomed, healed, restored, forgiven,
Who like me His praise should sing?
Praise Him, praise Him, praise Him, praise Him,
Praise the everlasting King.

Praise Him for His grace and favour
To our fathers in distress.
Praise Him still the same forever,
Slow to chide, and swift to bless.
Praise Him, praise Him, praise Him, praise Him
Glorious in His faithfulness.

Fatherlike He tends and spares us;
Well our feeble frame He Knows.
In His hands He gently bears us,
Rescues us from all our foes.
Praise Him, praise Him, praise Him, praise Him,
Widely as His mercy goes.

Angels help us to adore Him;
Ye behold Him face to face;
Sun and moon, bow down before Him,
Dwellers all in time and space.
Praise Him, praise Him, praise Him, praise Him,
Praise with us the God of grace.

StF 83 Henry Francis Lyte (1793-1847)

Reading: Luke 9: 51-62 NIV

⁵¹ As the time approached for him to be taken up to heaven, Jesus resolutely set out for Jerusalem. ⁵² And he sent messengers on ahead, who went into a Samaritan village to get things ready for him; ⁵³ but the people there did not welcome him, because he was heading for Jerusalem. ⁵⁴ When the disciples James and John saw this, they asked, "Lord, do you want us to call fire down from heaven to destroy them?" ⁵⁵ But Jesus turned and rebuked them. ⁵⁶ Then he and his disciples went to another village.

⁵⁷ As they were walking along the road, a man said to him, "I will follow you wherever you go." ⁵⁸ Jesus replied, "Foxes have dens and birds have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head."

⁵⁹ He said to another man, "Follow me." But he replied, "Lord, first let me go and bury my father." ⁶⁰ Jesus said to him, "Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and proclaim the kingdom of God."

⁶¹ Still another said, "I will follow you, Lord; but first let me go back and say goodbye to my family." ⁶² Jesus replied, "No one who puts a hand to the plough and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God."

Reading : Galatians 5: 1, 13-26 NIV

¹It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.

¹³ You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh; rather, serve one another humbly in love. ¹⁴ For the entire law is fulfilled in keeping this one command: "Love your neighbour as yourself." ¹⁵ If you bite and devour each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other.

¹⁶ So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. ¹⁷ For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh. They are in conflict with each other, so that you are not to do whatever you want.

¹⁸ But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. ¹⁹ The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; ²⁰ idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions ²¹ and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.

²² But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.

²⁴ Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. ²⁵ Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. ²⁶ Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other.

Hymn: Be Thou my vision

Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart
Naught be all else to me, save that thou art
Thou my best thought, by day or by night
Waking or sleeping, thy presence my light

Be thou my wisdom, and thou my true word
I ever with thee and thou with me, Lord
Thou my great Father, and I thy true son
Thou in me dwelling and I with thee one

Be thou my battle shield sword for the fight
be thou my dignity thou my delight
Thou mu souls shelter, thou my high tower
Raise thou me heavenward O power of my power

Riches I heed not, nor man's empty praise
Thou mine inheritance, now and always
Thou and thou only first in my heart
High King of heaven, my treasure thou art

Heart of my own heart, whatever befall
Still be my vision, O ruler of all
Heart of my own heart, whatever befall
Still be my vision, O ruler of all

StF 545 Irish 8th century

Translated by Mary Elizabeth Byrne (1880-1931)

Versified by Eleanor Henriatta Hull (1860-1935) (alt)

Reflection on the Readings *written by Jill Baker and published in The Vine at Home*

Pilgrimage is very much back in fashion in Britain today and not only as a religious practice. Television schedules include a variety of programmes in which celebrities and others are challenged to make a pilgrimage of some sort. In particular, the ancient pilgrim paths to Santiago da Compostela in Northern Spain have become immensely popular, with around 350,000 such pilgrims in 2019. Of course, numbers were drastically reduced by the Covid-19 pandemic but are now building up again.

In planning a pilgrimage, two key questions need to be considered – ‘Where am I heading?’ and ‘How am I going to get there?’ Luke’s Gospel is often seen as a gospel of journey, of pilgrimage, and today’s passage offers some interesting answers to these two questions. Luke makes it very clear that for Jesus, the destination is not in doubt – indeed, the whole gospel can be seen as a journey to Jerusalem, and here we are told that Jesus, knowing that the end of his life is approaching, ‘set his face to go to Jerusalem’. That expression suggests mixed emotions – both longing and resignation perhaps. We know that Jesus felt compelled to go to Jerusalem and that he felt great love and compassion for the city; a few chapters later (13:33-34) Luke records Jesus saying, ‘... it is

impossible for a prophet to be killed away from Jerusalem. Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often have I desired to gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing!’ It is clear too that Jesus knew it would be in Jerusalem that he would face the final challenges of religious and political opposition and that it would be in Jerusalem that he would die. Luke tells us that Jesus sent messengers ahead of him – the reason for this is not clearly explained – was it a way of ensuring that he didn’t change his mind?

Why don’t you just pause for a moment and consider any journeys you have made with that mixture of longing and resignation, of anticipation and apprehension, of hope and fear... perhaps to a meeting which you knew would be both joyful and difficult... perhaps to a funeral... perhaps, after the lockdowns of the past two years, to a much-postponed event or gathering where you can rejoice to see family or friends, but would also be all too aware of those no longer with us, or no longer able to travel... Perhaps, in such circumstances each of us might, like Jesus, need to ‘set our face’ to make the journey and not allow ourselves to be deterred or delayed.

It seems that the body language of Jesus makes clear to all those he encounters that he is a man on a mission. The Samaritan village does not receive him, which the disciples James and John find insulting; they want to punish the village, but Jesus rebukes them and moves on.

Again, let’s pause and reflect on our situation now. Today within British Methodism is Conference Sunday. Those who will be received into Full Connexion and ordained this very day have, in a way, set their faces towards a particular destination and may need something of this sense of resolution themselves as they travel a path which will not always be smooth. Indeed, all of us, ordained or lay, are pilgrims on a journey. Over the next few days, the representatives gathered in Telford from across the Connexion will be considering all sorts of questions about our journey, our pilgrimage, as a denomination. Both connexionally and locally we all have to return again and again to the same two pilgrimage questions, ‘What is our destination?’ and ‘How are we going to get there?’ They are not easy questions to answer at a time like this but do we need to hear something of the commitment and urgency of Jesus’ replies to these would-be followers? Do we need to note the willingness of Jesus to embrace sacrifice and rejection? If we are going to travel the same path as Jesus, we too need to set our faces towards a future which might involve challenge, change and conflict.

In response to the thoughts Jill Baker set out in her reflections on the Luke passage, here are some questions for discussion with a friend or for you to reflect on today:

- Do you think it is always necessary to have a destination in mind for a pilgrimage?
- Is there a sense in which your local congregation (or the wider Methodist Church or Church grouping you are part of) is on a journey? Where do you feel we are going?
- How do you feel about the way in which Jesus answered his would-be followers in Luke 9:57-62? Are you aware of a sense of urgency about the church's mission at this time?
- Do you find yourself 'looking back' at times? How does this affect your mission?

Hymn : Tell out my soul

Tell out, my soul, the greatness of the Lord!
Unnumbered blessings give my spirit voice;
Tender to me the promise of his word;
In God my Saviour shall my heart rejoice

Tell out, my soul, the greatness of his Name!
Make known his might, the deeds his arm has done;
His mercy sure, from age to age to same;
His holy Name--the Lord, the Mighty One

Tell out, my soul, the greatness of his might!
Powers and dominions lay their glory by
Proud hearts and stubborn wills are put to flight
The hungry fed, the humble lifted high

Tell out, my soul, the glories of his word!
Firm is his promise, and his mercy sure
Tell out, my soul, the greatness of the Lord
To children's children and for evermore!

A Blessing

There is a world out there, just waiting for the good news you carry.
There are people out there, hoping for the kind of hope you have.
There are lives out there, waiting to be shaped and changed by God's love,
through you.

May you go out and seek to serve the God who loves you.

Amen.

Prayer by Tim Baker

The Grace

**May the Grace of the Lord Jesus Christ,
The love of God
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit
be with us all, now and evermore. Amen**

Ongoing worship and pastoral care



For those worshipping online, as the service finishes we can join together in a time of fellowship via Zoom.

For those without internet access why not get on the phone to someone in similar circumstances to yourself and encourage and help each other as part of your ongoing worship and care of one another.