

SERVICE NOTES 4TH JULY 2021

Lectionary passages:-

Ezekiel 2 v1-5;

Psalm 123;

I Corinthians 12 v2-10;

Mark 6.1-13

The underlying theme of today's passages is that of calling – *calling by God to his purposes*. Ezekiel is called and warned in advance of the difficulties of such a call. He is sent not as a missionary to a difficult and foreign place, where everyone speaks in a strange tongue but to his own people. His people are as God says, a rebellious people, unwilling to listen and obey God's voice which has been given through various ways over a number of years.

Ezekiel is reminded it is not a new thing for the people he speaks to, to have always been obstinate! They will be as obstinate and stubborn as their fathers before them. Ezekiel is not to worry about results! He is to preach and declare God's word in Prophecy. It will be said in subsequent years:- "a prophet was indeed amongst us" we say it too when we read his 48 chapters put in the Bible for us to understand more clearly God's ways and will. We learn later in the book, Ezekiel had a moral responsibility to preach to make sure their fellow citizens have a chance to hear God speak.

The same is true for the 12 disciples sent out by Jesus in our passage in Mark 6. Jesus warns them it may not be easy, some will reject them and the good news they bring of God's Kingdom. The 12 will be rejected in some places, where they are to shake the soil off their feet and move on.

The 12 go out and preach repentance of sin as John the Baptist had before them, as well as healing and exorcising many. God is active through preaching, changing many hearts as well as perception, calling all to turn from their sin and accept the forgiveness God offers through Jesus Christ. But most don't understand, and do not see Jesus as anything special, he has grown up in their town been to school with their children, how can he have a message from God, he has not even been properly trained or educated, he is just a carpenter and the son of a carpenter!

The passage in I Corinthians 12 reminds us of the many gifts available to the Christian, often given at the time of their initiation to the Christian way, maybe at baptism, but not necessarily. When church members embrace the gifts and talents given by God, then Jesus can come to dwell amongst us, as he promised he would. A variety of gifted people always make up a true body of Christ in a location, called a church! It all begins when a preacher or teacher invites a response to the demands

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of God and his prophets and teachers to repent and turn from sin. And that response is acted on!

What has been your response to the call of God?

What is your gifting and gifts?

How are you using them in 2021 for the benefit of the church, these are all questions we need to ponder as we recognise the responsibility that goes with the call we all have from God.

Ezekiel and the Apostles took seriously God's call. They were not necessarily successful on many occasions, and they did encounter opposition, but they did as God asked....Do we?