

Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> July 2021

Priory Methodist Church, Bedford

10.30am

Morning Worship prepared and led by David Wells

**Where are you going?**

**Rural Mission Sunday**

**Welcome, Notices & Thanks**

**Introductory Music** played by Lynne Gound

**Hymn ~ Singing the Faith 465** ~ Guide me, O Thou great Jehovah,

1. Guide me, O Thou great Jehovah,  
Pilgrim through this barren land.  
I am weak, but Thou art mighty;  
Hold me with Thy powerful hand.  
Bread of heaven, bread of heaven,  
Feed me till I want no more;  
Feed me till I want no more.
2. Open now the crystal fountain,  
Where the living waters flow;  
Let the river of salvation,  
Follow all the desert through.  
Strong Deliverer, strong Deliverer,  
Be Thou still my Strength and Shield;  
Be Thou still my Strength and Shield.
3. When I tread the verge of Jordan,  
Bid my anxious fears subside;  
Death of death and hell's destruction,  
Land me safe on Canaan's side.  
Songs of praises, songs of praises,  
I will ever give to Thee;  
I will ever give to Thee.

*Author ~ William Williams (1717-1791) translated by Peter Williams (1727-1796)*

### **The Story of the Big Green Bus**

There was once a big green bus.

People loved this big green bus.

They loved going into this big green bus. The seats were comfortable. The windows were clean. They worked hard to keep it nice and clean and joined rotas to do so. Every year they painted it. Every week at specific times they met with their friends there.

The trouble is It was not a building it was vehicle. Sometimes someone would suggest that they used the bus as a vehicle. Take it out on the road, go to places, maybe pick up passengers and take them where they needed to go. But others were against that. If they drove the bus about it would get dirty, worse still it may get damaged, it might spoil the paint work. So it was decided just to leave the bus where it was. It never went anywhere. After a while weeds started to grow under it.

### **Bible Reading** ~ Psalm 121

I lift up my eyes to the mountains—  
where does my help come from?

My help comes from the LORD,  
the Maker of heaven and earth.

**He will not let your foot slip—  
he who watches over you will not slumber;  
indeed, he who watches over Israel  
will neither slumber nor sleep.**

The LORD watches over you—  
the LORD is your shade at your right hand;  
the sun will not harm you by day,  
nor the moon by night.

**The LORD will keep you from all harm—  
he will watch over your life;  
the LORD will watch over your coming and going  
both now and forevermore**

**Hymn ~ Singing the Faith 477** ~ Teach me to dance to the beat of your heart,

*Teach me to dance to the beat of your heart,  
Teach me to move in the power of your Spirit,  
Teach me to walk in the light of your presence,  
Teach me to dance to the beat of your heart.  
Teach me to love with your heart of compassion,  
Teach me to trust in the word of your promise,  
Teach me to hope in the day of your coming,  
Teach me to dance to the beat of your heart.*

1. You wrote the rhythm of life,  
Created heaven and earth;  
In You is joy without measure.  
So, like a child in your sight,  
I dance to see your delight,  
For I was made for your pleasure.
2. Let all my movements express  
a heart that loves to say 'yes',  
a will that leaps to obey you.  
Let all my energy blaze  
to see the joy in your face,  
let my whole being praise you, praise you.

*Authors - Graham Kendrick (b. 1950) and Steve Thompson.  
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**Gospel Reading** ~ The Gospel of Mark, chapter 6, verses 30-34 and 53-56

The apostles gathered around Jesus and reported to him all they had done and taught. 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.”

So they went away by themselves in a boat to a solitary place. But many who saw them leaving recognized them and ran on foot from all the towns and got there ahead of them. 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.

When they had crossed over, they landed at Gennesaret and moored the boat. As soon as they got out of the boat, people recognized Jesus. They ran throughout that whole region and carried the sick on mats to wherever they heard he was. And wherever he went—into villages, towns or countryside—they placed the sick in the marketplaces. They begged him to let them touch even the edge of his cloak, and all who touched it were healed.

### **Outline of my talk**

The second half of this reading shows Jesus healing and crowds of people running to meet with him. Jesus was very popular at this period of his ministry. This is in contrast with the opposition of that he will experience later on. Earlier in Mark's gospel the disciples were sent out by Jesus to do some of the things that he had been doing. As Christians we are all sent to share God's love to those who we meet in our day to day lives.

Today is Rural Mission Sunday.

Since the industrial revolution resulted in migration into towns and cities, what is rural has become defined as anything that is not urban. This is approximately 90% of the UK land mass. Approximately one person in five people in the UK live in rural areas. Rural communities are usually small but a complex mix of social types with differing values and beliefs.

Over two thirds of Anglican churches are in Rural villages . I am told that it is the same for Methodist Churches. Approximately 63% of churches in rural England are Anglican, 26% are Methodist, 5% are Baptist. The remainder are Congregational, United Reformed Church, Roman Catholic and independent They are usually quite small. Therefore it is a struggle for them to engage in Mission.

Since last December I have been working for Rural Mission Solutions an organisation that supports small rural churches in engaging in mission. The emphasis is that each church is unique, there is no one size fits all solutions to mission. Rather we encourage and support churches to discover their own “bespoke” ways of reaching out. A church could only do one small thing but they need to do it and trust God to bless it.

In our reading from Mark, The disciples have returned from their journey full of what they have experienced. Jesus is aware that they need to talk, rest and eat; perhaps Jesus, too, needs the rest. They have so much to share and reflect on, Their journey has changed them. It is in spending time with Jesus that we discover our own unique ministry. We do this by praying, reading the Bible and meeting with other believers at Church. We are the Body of Christ so when we meet together we are “hanging out” with Jesus We need to value each other’s gifts, especially the gifts that are not always seen as evangelistic. The promise of Psalm 121 is that when we walk together with God he will not let “our feet slip.” or cause us to stumble. Let’s keep moving on.

### **Prayer**

In our journeying with you,  
may we never lose our sense of direction,  
never lose sight of the landmark  
towards which we travel.  
And should cloud or rain obscure our vision,  
may we draw closer to you,  
so that our feet may tread  
in your footsteps,  
your words be our encouragement,  
and your love our protection  
against the storms that assail us. **Amen.**

### **Hymn ~ Singing the Faith 462 ~ Come with me, come wander, / Sing hey for the carpenter...**

1. Come with me, come wander, come welcome the world  
where strangers might smile or where stones may be hurled;  
come leave what you cling to, lay down what you clutch  
and find, with hands empty, that hearts can hold much.

Sing hey for the carpenter leaving his tools!  
Sing hey for the pharisees leaving their rules!  
Sing hey for the fishermen leaving their nets!  
Sing hey for the people who leave their regrets!

2. Come walk in my company, come sleep by my side,  
Come savour a lifestyle with nothing to hide;  
come sit at my table and eat with my friends,  
discovering that love which the world never ends.
3. Come share in my laughter, come close to my fears,  
come find yourself washed with the kiss of my tears;  
come stand close at hand while I suffer and die  
and find in three days how I never will lie.

4. Come leave your possessions, come share out your treasure,  
come give and receive without method or measure;  
come loose every bond that's resisting the Spirit,  
enabling the earth to be yours to inherit.

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## **The Lord's Prayer**

### **Hymn - Singing the Faith 673** ~ Will you come and follow me if I but call your name?

1. Will you come and follow me  
if I but call your name?  
Will you go where you don't know  
and never be the same?  
Will you let my love be shown,  
will you let my name be known,  
will you let my life be grown in you  
and you in me?
2. Will you leave yourself behind  
If I but call your name?  
Will you care for cruel and kind  
And never be the same?  
Will you risk the hostile stare  
Should your life attract or scare?  
Will you let me answer prayer  
In you and you in me?
3. Will you let the blinded see  
If I but call your name?  
Will you set the prisoners free  
And never be the same?  
Will you kiss the leper clean,  
And do such as this unseen,  
And admit to what I mean  
In you and you in me?
4. Will you love the 'you' you hide  
If I but call your name?  
Will you quell the fear inside  
And never be the same?  
Will you use the faith you've found  
To reshape the world around,  
Through my sight and touch and sound  
In you and you in me?
5. Lord, your summons echoes true  
when you but call my name.  
Let me turn and follow you  
and never be the same.  
In your company I'll go  
where your love and footsteps show.  
Thus I'll move and live and grow  
in you and you in me.

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### **Comment**

"If you can't fly then run; if you can't run then walk; if you can't walk then crawl – but, whatever you do, you have to keep moving forward." (*Martin Luther King Junior*).

### **Blessing**

May the road rise up to meet you.

May the wind be always at your back.

May the sun shine warm upon your face; the rains fall soft upon your fields,  
and until we meet again, may God hold you in the palm of His hand. **Amen.**