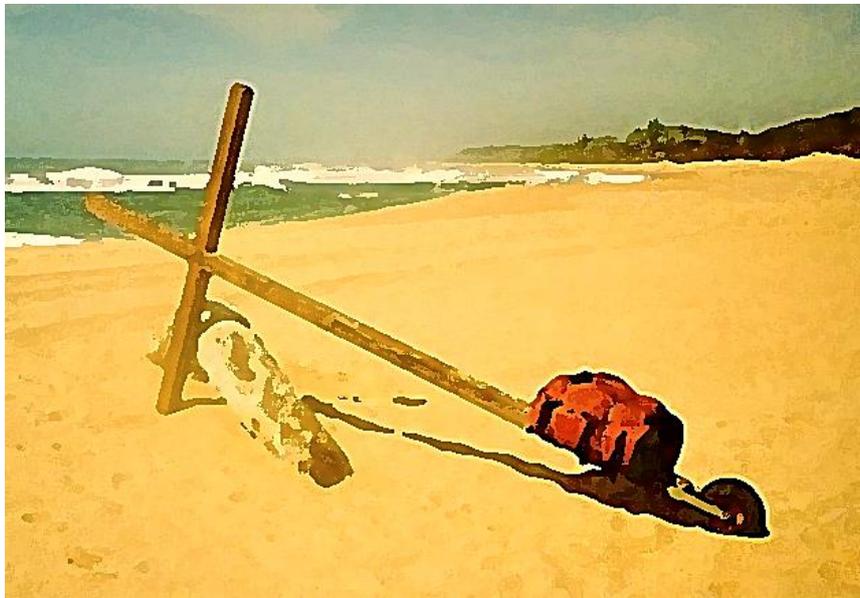




CHURCH OF CHRIST THE CORNERSTONE

Lent Meditations – Week Two

WILL YOU COME AND FOLLOW ME...



Through the weeks of Lent the invitation is there to take a journey with God and with others as we follow the steps that took Jesus to the cross and through the cross to resurrection life. The journey is from where we are now to where God is leading us. We don't always know where the journey will take us, so we can't get the tourist guide book out and pick and choose the sights we want to see. We may take the time to follow where others have led and look at what has been important for them, but more importantly we can take up the invitation to look again at what it means to take that journey as disciples, those who are learning from God and one another as we go.

WILL YOU COME AND FOLLOW ME...AND BE READY TO SHARE YOUR STORY WITH OTHERS?

Learning the Way: God's Promise

The law brings retribution but the promise is in the plan:

God hears the voice of the crying man.

Impetuous Peter just can't believe that he really does just need to believe.

Lord, when hope seems hopeless, help me stick to the light:

To grasp that cross and cling to you. AMEN

Symbols: candles to light the way (see Pascal candle idea for children)

Genesis 17:1-7, 15-16

When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the Lord appeared to him and said, 'I am God Almighty. Live always in my presence and be blameless, so that I may make my covenant with you and give you many descendants.' Abram bowed low, and God went on, 'This is my covenant with you: you are to be the father of many nations. Your name will no longer be Abram but Abraham; for I will make you the father of many nations. I shall make you exceedingly fruitful; I shall make nations out of you and kings shall spring from you. I shall maintain my covenant with you and your descendants after you, generation after generation, an everlasting covenant: I shall be your God, yours and your descendants.'

God said to Abraham, 'As for Sarai your wife, you are to call her not Sarai, but Sarah. I shall bless her and give you a son by her. I shall bless her and she will be the mother of nations; from her kings of peoples will spring.'

- **This is part of a very private family story, between husband and wife, but what God is asking of them is that they are prepared to become part of God's story. Look back over their life as a family in the preceding chapters of Genesis. What must have been going through their minds? How does this link with other promises that God has made.**

- **There is a child in the family, Ishmael. How does he and Hagar his mother become part of the story? How do you respond to their trying to make God's promise become reality?**

Mark 8:31-38

Jesus began to teach them that the Son of Man had to endure great suffering, and to be rejected by the elders, chief priests and scribes; to be put to death and rise again three days afterwards. He spoke about it plainly. At this Peter took hold of him and began to rebuke him. But Jesus, turning and looking at his disciples, rebuked Peter. 'Out of my sight, Satan!' he said. 'You think as men think, not as God thinks.' Then he called the people to him, as well as his disciples, and said to them, 'Anyone who wants to be a follower of mine must renounce self, he must take up his cross and follow me. Whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and for the gospel's will save it. What does anyone gain by winning the whole world at the cost of his life? What can he give to buy his life back? If anyone is ashamed of me and my words in this wicked and godless age, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.'

- **Peter has just made the amazing declaration of his belief that Jesus is the Messiah, with all the hope and expectation that he would have attached to that. Then Jesus begins to tell them just what that really means. Why do you think that Mark puts this here in his gospel?**
- **Peter can't cope with what he is hearing. He doesn't want to listen. Why not? Does Jesus' response to Peter seem too harsh?**
- **What does 'Take up your cross and follow me...' mean for you?**

Take time to consider:

Both these readings are set at important turning points in the stories of those involved in them. In both we hear people being told some truths that may be hard for them to understand or cope with.

- **Both Abraham and Peter struggled with what they were being told, but eventually their lives witnessed to what God was doing with them.**

Think about the times when God has touched your life.

- **How easy do you find it to share your experience with others?**
- **Both Abraham and Peter were given confidence to believe what God was saying. It didn't come straight away. What would help you in having the confidence to tell your story?**
- **Are there ways in which the church supports you in this? Could there be more?**

If you have time to consider this:

What resources would we need as a church to be able to better support people in sharing their faith?

You may choose to consider these questions as a group, with friends or on your own. If you want to discuss any aspects further, either discuss with your group leader or contact the ministers: ernesto@cornerstonemk.co.uk or brenda.mosedale@cornerstonemk.co.uk

For further reflection:

You may also like to read the following passages and reflect on them.

Psalms 22:23-31; Romans 4:13 –end.