

Service for Week 1st– 7th Sept 2025 By
Chaplain Andy

Our Opening Prayer.

Lord Jesus Christ, you call us, as you called your first disciples, to follow you: not simply to believe, but to keep on following where you lead.

Help us to follow your example, pursuing the way of love. To follow you through the life of discipleship, not allowing us to lose heart so that we wander away from you, but keeping faith to the end by walking in your footsteps.

Amen

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

Bible Reading Luke 14:27- 35

(And) Anyone who does not carry his cross and follow me cannot be my disciple. "Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Will he not first sit down and estimate the cost to see if he has enough money to complete it?

For if he lays the foundation and is not able to finish it, everyone who sees it will ridicule him, saying, 'This fellow began to build and was not able to finish.'

"Or suppose a king is about to go to war against another king. Will he not first sit down and consider whether he is able with ten thousand men to oppose the one coming against him with twenty thousand? If he is not able, he will send a delegation while the other is still a long way off and will ask for terms of peace.

In the same way, any of you who does not give up everything he has cannot be my disciple. "Salt is good, but if it loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is fit neither for the soil nor for the manure pile; it is thrown out. "He who has ears to hear, let him hear."

Holy words, Holy wisdom,

Thanks be to God.

Reflection

Our reading this week are the words of Jesus when he makes it clear to his disciples that there is a cost to following his teachings. Following Christ is often referred to as 'discipleship' and we know that the early Christians faced rejection even from their own families, persecution by the authorities and even death because of their faith and discipleship.

Today in many countries of the world



Christians face persecution including Burma, China, Vietnam, Eritrea, India, Iran, Nigeria, North Korea, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Afghanistan, Somalia, Yemen, Libya, and the Sudan. We read of churches being burnt down not only in these countries but across Europe.

Jesus warned his disciples that by not following their previous religious practices even their own families may turn against them and said 'anyone who does not carry their cross and follow me cannot be my disciple.' In talking about carrying their cross he was referring to the cost – the persecution they were going to face by following him.

Here in the UK, you will know that people who openly say they are Christians and attendance at church services has greatly diminished over the years. When I was a boy, I remember how full church services were with often every seat taken. Recently I took a service in a large church where just six people were the congregation.

But despite this change in habits and lifestyle we can still be followers of Christ – to practice 'discipleship' in our own lives by following his teachings. In our reading Jesus gives a few examples of not starting out on a course of action without first thinking it

through first and then following it to its conclusion.

If we want to live as Jesus taught, we need to follow our faith and develop our discipleship. To show others what it means to love our neighbour, to care and love one another and to work for justice and peace in our world. Salt was used then as now to enhance the taste of food and Jesus talked about salt that had lost its saltiness taste, He said it was useless and was thrown away.

He was making the point that if we have faith and know how faith has helped us in our lives, we should spread our beneficial knowledge to others -spreading the beneficial saltiness. Yes, we may face rejection, yes, we may face disapproval from our own family but we will be continuing the work of the disciples in bringing the Kingdom of God closer. What is the Kingdom of God? It is the way that God wants us to live together in harmony and peace. **Amen**

Closing Prayer

Lord Jesus Christ, it is not easy to follow you; not if I am serious about discipleship. But you are always leading me forward, eager to guide me into new experiences of your love and a deeper understanding of your purpose. Lord, you are still calling, inviting me to respond. Help me to walk with you. **Amen.**

Prayers inspired by 'Prayerfully Yours' by Nick Fawcett.