

Dear Friends,

When I was 5 years old, I went to a birthday party in a brand-new dress. I thought that this dress was the most beautiful dress I had ever seen. It went down almost to the floor, it had long sleeves a lace collar and cuffs and the most beautiful floral pattern on it ever.

During the party, all of the girls decided to have a competition to see who had the most beautiful dress and I just knew that I was going to win. Children were voted out one at a time until there was only me and one other girl left. The voting then took place and **everyone** voted for **her** dress!!! I was in shock. During the rest of the party several girls whispered to me that my dress was the best but that they liked the other girl better and so had voted for her. I would say that I've put it all behind me but 40 years later and I'm still telling this story.

Wearing my dress, I felt like a part of me was showing through for everyone to see. The dress and me were one, inseparable. If people liked my dress, then they would like me too. The pain came when I realised that the dress might be the best but something about me was not good enough to be accepted by others.

This can be how we feel when we show our faith to others through words or actions and it is just not accepted by them. We know that God is good enough and therefore the only thing that can be getting in the way is us. We are not worth the message that God has asked us to give. If this keeps being reinforced through, what we see as, continuous failures then we slowly quieten down and stop showing our faith to anyone. In that way we can avoid any rejection and stop doing the harm that we are obviously causing to God's Kingdom.

If this is you then please hear these words from 1 John 3:1 "see what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him." The dress really is the most beautiful one ever, keep showing it off to others with pride.

Blessings, Rev'd Bekkie

NORTHGATE

The weekly notices of
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Sunday, 4th July 2021
Oakham Methodist Church Service led by
Mr Tony Law



Call to Worship: Shake off the dust of tiredness: come and be refreshed.

Shake off the dust of complacency: come and be challenged. Shake off the dust of hesitancy: come and be encouraged to be Christ's hands and feet in our world today.

Praise: O God, all-sufficient one, we give you thanks and praise that you are all we need. You are enough. Thank you that you love us so much, and provide everything we need for the journey of life. You didn't promise that following you would be easy, but we thank you that you care about us as you do the birds of the sky and the lilies in the field. You know our every need.

Thank you that your thoughts are higher than our thoughts, your ways higher than our ways. Thank you that when we come to you empty, your arms reach out to embrace us. **Amen.**

Confession: Forgive us, Lord, when we do not travel light; when we are weighed down by our fear of failure, with wanting to be approved, with needing to do things the way we've always done them. Forgive us, and free us to voice your wisdom, embody your compassion and share your healing. Jesus Christ, you died and rose again that we might be released from all the worldly things that weigh us down. Thank you that we are forgiven, that our chains are gone, and we have been set free to serve you once again. **Amen.**

Reading: Mark 6:1-13

Reflection: Up to this point in Mark's gospel Jesus has been doing amazing things and people are in awe and wonder over them, and then he returns to his hometown and everything changes.

Our passage begins the same as many of the earlier ones, Jesus teaches in the synagogue, people are astounded and ask where his wisdom is coming from. But then the events take a different turn. These people have watched Jesus grow from a child to a man, as a carpenter he may well have done work for many of them, they know his social status and how he should be fitting in to society and it appears that the Jesus they know has suddenly got too big for his boots. Because they cannot see beyond the person they know, Jesus is able to perform very few miracles and he stands amazed at what has happened.

So many of us today struggle with the fact that the people who are closest to us are the ones who are least likely to share our faith.

It hurts that those we love cannot see or know the God that we know and see. Many of us feel guilt when we think that our loved ones look at us and our faith and do not find it attractive or compelling. What are we doing wrong? **Take heart,** Jesus was in exactly the same position as us, but Jesus did not give up.

In the very next part of our reading he sends the disciples out with instructions of what to take with them in their own mission. All of the tools and equipment which they could use to protect and sustain themselves are to be left behind. Just go as you are into the communities, rely on nothing but the words that God gives to you, don't force it, but respect those you go to. If they don't want to listen, move on and don't carry the burden of that loss with you. The disciples were successful in their mission, I wonder whether it is because they simply focussed on planting seeds rather than trying to grow the entire crop.

Response: Lord, sometimes I feel as if the whole world has rejected me; as if I fail others and you when my faith is not attractive to them. Help me to shake off the dust of that untruth and anoint me with your gifts of hope and healing, that I may know your presence and recognise that it is enough.

Hymn: 239 Singing the Faith

Sent by the Lord am I; my hands are ready now
To make the earth the place in which the Kingdom comes (x2)

The angels cannot change a world of hurt and pain
Into a world of love, of justice and of peace.
The task is mine to do, to set it really free.
Oh, help me to obey; help me to do your will.

Intercessions: Pray for those of your friends and family who you wish would find faith. Those you feel that you have failed. Those who need God's presence at this time. Thank God that your prayers and your desire for others to find faith is the only equipment you need to be carrying, ask God to bless your prayers so that you may be fruitful in the seeds that you plant.

Sending Out: When your mission in life seems impossible, may you know the courage of the first disciples, the support of Jesus your friend, and the empowering of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**
(Service prepared by the Rev'd Bekkie Wright)