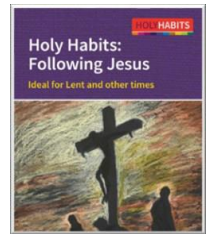




HOLY HABITS: FOLLOWING JESUS

(For use with or without the online Zoom meeting)



Week 2: 25th Feb - 'JESUS SERVING WITH GLADNESS'

Focus habits: 'Serving' and
Luke 4:16-19 'Gladness and Generosity'

Opening Words: Isaiah 61:1-2 (NIV) *'The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me, because the LORD has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners, ² to proclaim the year of the LORD's favour and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn...'*

Opening Song: 'God's Spirit is in my heart' by Hubert J Richards <https://youtu.be/JS3oTdmDobU>
(Reflect on the words if you do not have access to the music) Words adapted from New World ©1967 Oxford University Press. Music ©1969 Vanguard Music Company.

God's Spirit is in my heart He has called me and set me apart;
this is what I have to do - what I have to do:

He sent me to give the Good News to the poor, tell prisoners that they are prisoners no more, tell blind people that they can see, and set the down-trodden free, and go tell everyone the news that the Kingdom of God has come; and go tell everyone the news that God's Kingdom has come.

Just as the Father sent me, so I'm sending you out to be
my witnesses throughout the world - the whole of the world: *He sent me...*

Don't carry a load in your pack, you don't need two shirts on your back;
a workman can earn his own keep - can earn his own keep: *He sent me...*

Don't worry what you have to say; don't worry, because on that day
God's Spirit will speak in your heart - will speak in your heart: *He sent me...*

Prayer: Lord Jesus, in this place and at this time, open our eyes to your word and our hearts to your call, that we may join with you in living out your manifesto of justice. Amen.

Bible Reading: Luke 4:16-19 (NRSV) (As you listen/read - what words or phrases do you notice? Note these and we will return to them later.)

¹⁶ When he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, he went to the synagogue on the sabbath day, as was his custom. He stood up to read, ¹⁷ and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written: ¹⁸ 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, ¹⁹ to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour.'

Reflection: We will watch a clip from a Christian organisation called 'Mercy Ships' - <https://youtu.be/uAr01XkwdMA> (If you don't have an internet option think about some of the Christian charities you know who serve the poor.)

Our Bible passage today is often called 'The Nazareth Manifesto' with Jesus laying out his understanding of his calling. His words 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me' links with last week's session. What does the Spirit anoint Jesus for? A ministry of proclamation and service – serving is a hallmark of discipleship; a Christ-like way of living. Jesus mentions it in Matthew 20:28 when he says he came *'not to be served but to serve.'*

Characteristically, Luke presents Jesus with a 'bias to the poor', something that recurs in Luke's version of the beatitudes (Luke 6:20). The words of Isaiah, quoted by Jesus, convey a real sense of gladness and generosity in serving. The vision is not one of drudgery, but of good news, release, freedom and favour.

Questions for discussion:

1. Drudgery or delight – what does serving feel like to you?
2. Jesus was anointed to serve. Is serving something you associate with the Spirit's anointing for you, or do you tend to associate anointing with worship and preaching? What might you need to do about this?
3. How does Jesus' manifesto compare to the mission statement of your church?
4. Luke presents Jesus with a particular passion for serving and bringing good news to the poor. Whom do you have a calling to serve, both as a church and in your day-to-day lives – at work, at home, in your local community or the wider world?
5. How might you more fully support one another in the day-to-day service you are involved with?
6. Returning to the words you noted from the Luke Bible passage, which other things might you need to pay attention to?

Respond: 'Beauty for Brokenness (God of the poor)' by Graham Kendrick <https://youtu.be/3kVHKuldZyw>

Beauty for brokenness, Hope for despair, Lord, in the suffering, This is our prayer
Bread for the children, Justice, joy, peace, Sunrise to sunset, Your kingdom increase!

Shelter for fragile lives, Cures for their ills, Work for the craftsman, Trade for their skills
Land for the dispossessed, Rights for the weak, Voices to plead the cause, Of those who can't speak.

*God of the poor, Friend of the weak, Give us compassion we pray.
Melt our cold hearts, Let tears fall like rain, Come, change our love From a spark to a flame*

Refuge from cruel wars, Havens from fear, Cities for sanctuary, Freedoms to share
Peace to the killing-fields, Scorched earth to green, Christ for the bitterness, His cross for the pain.

Rest for the ravaged earth, Oceans and streams, Plundered and poisoned, Our future, our dreams.
Lord, end our madness, Carelessness, greed, Make us content with, The things that we need. *God of the ...*

Lighten our darkness, Breathe on this flame, Until your justice, Burns brightly again.
Until the nations, Learn of your ways, Seek your salvation, And bring you their praise. *God of the ...*

Graham Kendrick Copyright © 1993 Make Way Music,

Prayer: God of the poor, grant us compassion and anoint us afresh with your Spirit, that we may be bearers of good news, freedom and sight to those we encounter as we follow your Son. Amen.

'Take-home' idea:

This week, be attentive to ways in which you can be good news to others, especially those who can easily be overlooked or neglected. It could be something as simple as an attentive smile, a careful thank-you or patient listening that conveys a real sense of love and care.