

## St Andrews , Canterbury

22/6/14

### Key reading 2 Cor 3:7 – 18; Matt 5:43 - 48

Mahatma Ghandi looked at the church of his day, compared it to the Sermon on the Mount, and said,

“ I like your Christ, I do not like your Christians. Your Christians are so unlike your Christ”

And yet, Jesus call to Follow “ *Akoloutheo moi*” (Come with me), is not so much walking behind and watching what he does, as sharing in his lifestyle, living his way so that he is reproduced x times. Apprenticeship to Jesus in - **Being and doing – fruit and gifts –as sent so send**

St Paul in Romans 12: 1 – 2 puts it a little differently

The word in Gk is “*metamorphosis*”

He says much the same in 2 Corinthians 3: 18. “*Metamorphosis*” again but in a tense that indicates a continuing process., not a once for all.

Note the indication of a more and more clear reflection of Christ’s likeness/glory. Not as you see distorted in the Hall of Mirrors.

When Jesus said we had to be “perfect” as our heavenly Father is perfect, the Greek indicates the idea of “completion”

The same word is used when Jesus on the cross cries “ It is finished” all is complete, “perfick as Pop Larkin would say. “*Teleios*” Sylvia does water colours and when she is satisfied that a painting is complete she puts “SM” in the bottom RH corner. It means she is satisfied, we have only one painting that she hasn’t signed, it’s a Norfolk windmill and the sails are the wrong size, it needs more work.

It’s in our lounge but unfinished, we’ve got used to it; we know it’s wrong but it’s not all that important, in the priority list.

On the RHDR operations website there is a page of “Job Descriptions” but it reads “Job Decsriptions”, we’re so used to it no-one notices.

I love the story of the two church-going women were always at loggerheads and one accused the other of not being very Christian, the other replied “ God hasn’t finished with me yet.”

That needs to be our attitude, “ God hasn’t finished with me yet”

I have grown my own veg for 35 years, I get some weird and wonderful shapes, but the taste is something even our youngest grand daughter can discern. The supermarkets of course are looking for uniform shape and size, something that matches a “perfect standard”. I once entered a local horticultural show with some apples, chilli peppers, courgette/marrows and tomatoes. The Tomatoes were rejected because I had taken the green calyxes off, but I got a first, second and third prize. I can honestly say that I have a perfect record of winning prizes in every show I’ve entered.

But when I hold up Jesus, as revealed in the Gospels, as the object of comparison I fall way short. I could, of course, say, I but that is just me, continue in complacency, and leave it at that, not even trying to change , as if it didn’t really matter.

But it does, it affects our witness in the world:

I once observed a member of a congregation I served in a supermarket, she didn’t know I was at the next till. She was laying into the cashier something awful, the latter didn’t know she was a Christian, but if she had, what a witness.

Many years ago, guarding on a Narrow Gauge Railway in the Lake District, my profession was known. One day, on a lay over chatting with the driver I said something about something and the driver said” I wouldn’t have expected that from a man of your profession”

Whoops Big Time.

So what can be done about being changed until the likeness and image of Jesus is perfect or complete in us.

i.e. Gifts of the Spirit and the Fruit of the Spirit.

First thing to note is that you can’t do it by your own efforts – can you stand in a bucket and lift yourself off the ground? Given a block and tackle, something other than yourself, leverage etc. things are different. But need to put ones self in the position for God to work on us, Paul does say in 2 Corinthians “ under the influence of the Spirit we are being changed....” So each one of us needs ask, “Am I being changed?” So how can I let the Spirit have more influence.

If I am sweaty from the railway or garden, Sylvia might call me to have a shower before dinner. It’s no good just standing there in filthy overalls looking at the shower running, and RMH have put a lovely new one in our home, I have to strip off and get in there with the soap and water and let the shower get to work on me.

In our growing to perfection there are certain things we can do to give the Holy Spirit half a chance. There are five of them, one for each finger.

## **1 Worship**

And I do not mean going to church and listening to sermons. In the nativity story when the magi enter we are told they fell to their knees, they were awestruck. Our word comes from an old Saxon word “

weorthskippe” getting together to place a value on something, you can worship alone when you look at Jesus and what he has done for you, all that hope, joy, peace, patience, perhaps that time when you were healed when all said “no chance” .

Lift Jesus higher ( as the song says) Be awestruck, gob smacked, overwhelmed by the wonder of who God is and what he does. When words fail and you are silent. Once the groom at a wedding turned as his bride came to stand next to him. Tears welled up, he went for his hanky, I waited and then asked, “ Are you OK?” His voice caught as he struggled to speak, all I heard was “ She’s so beautiful!” Have you see the beauty of Jesus? And pray in the words of the song

“ Let the beauty of Jesus be seen in me  
all His wondrous compassion and purity:  
O thou Spirit divine,  
All my nature refine  
Till the beauty of Jesus is seen in me”

## **2 Study**

Alone, in a group, even listen to the sermon and make notes. Read the right sort of books. Read the instruction manual, see the compassion of Jesus and ask the Spirit to place someone in mind for you to have compassion for, compassion is not a feeling but, as with Jesus. In Greek the word is “*splangthizomai*”, meaning that you have seen something so gut wrenching that you have to act. We need to ask “Make me like that Lord”.

Like the sculptor who was asked how he could make an angel out of a rough piece of rock and replied, I knock off all the bits that don’t look like an angel”

### 3 Prayer

I don't mean a great shopping list, we have a prayer chain at our church. We've just had an update on all the requests since January. Sylvia and I select a few each day, making sure that we give thanks for good news.

There are 4 types of prayer spell out the words "ACTS"

- a) Adoration – gazing at the nature of God
- b) Confession – agreeing with God that you are not what you should be
- c) Thanksgiving for what you've experienced, what he has done for you for others
- d) Supplication, pleading with him for your own and others needs, remember he knows your need before you ask.

And don't pester him with things that are piffle, like who wins the world cup, He has bigger problems, Syria, Iraq, Ukraine, Health and poverty in Africa. Like Jesus look beyond your own needs to that of others. Phil 2:3. He is not your servant, he is Your LORD. One of my pet hates is the phrase "personal saviour", it's like proposing to your girl by asking if she will become your personal cook. She will cook, but as your wife, Jesus saves, yes, as your LORD.

### 4 Fellowship (fee lag skippe)

Originally to lay down money in partnership with others, throwing in your lot, working with others for the Kingdom. We are the Body of Christ, not individuals, where is your part. Beware "*Rondloopers*"( an Afrikaans word for "*Nomad*" "*Grasshoppers*". You cannot just live on your favourite takeaways, you need a balanced diet. Why did God place you in this congregation at this time? No-one ever grew as a Christian by

flitting from church to church, growth comes when you are a specific part of the Body of Christ using your gifts and talents along with everyone else.

## 5. **Service**

We are called to serve the Lord with gladness, seeking with others to identify what are your spiritual gifts, not talents, GIFTS, and seek ways to use them as a “deacon” Diaconia, one who waits on tables who seeks to serve God through service to others. Considering ourselves, as did Jesus, as a nothing, see Phil Chapter 2.

## **Finally**

I encourage you to see yourself as a work of art, picture, painting, play, film?

Let God write script for your life?

Let The Holy Spirit be the director, it is not just Tommy Cooper who says, “ Not like that – like this”?

The Spirit is calling for rehearsal after rehearsal until he says “ That’s it!

Let the public in”

So, Jesus, THE AUTHOR, writes and directs the script “ Knock off all the bits that don’t look like an angel. Until he can put his signature on us as “ Finished”

What does God need to work on next in your life?

Here are two anecdotes from the D Day landing.

a) a badly wounded soldier was left by his unit with a supply of morphine, his bren gun, and two disarmed German soldiers as his prisoners. One of the Germans was badly injured, the British Tommy shared his Morphine. Love your enemies.

b) A nurse caring for a badly burned German Sailor, couldn't understand what the man, a 19 year old, was trying to say, But she leaned over and gave him a peck on the forehead and he died peacefully.

What is the next job God needs to do on you?

Amen