

June 21, 2020
Matthew 24: 24-39
Sermon: How will You Live the Mystery, Tomorrow?

It seems that when Jesus called his disciples to follow him, it was a simple invitation to come and follow him. In doing so he told them, he would make them disciples who would fish for disciples instead of actual fish. It was not a new job opportunity but an invitation to become involved in God's ministry to establish God's kingdom in the world we live in. Hence we pray in the Lord's Prayer, that God's "kingdom come." And that is what we are being invited to do bt bring disciples to God's Kingdom

Jesus took his disciples through a training time where he preached, prayed and did bible studies. He took them to villages and to meet people they did not normally talk too. They saw people's lives restored to God's Kingdom, healed and resurrected. And they followed him on the highways of Galilee and saw and learnt what Jesus was asking of them as they did God's ministry.

It may be that Matthew's gospel is his memoirs of his time with Jesus. He left behind coins, livelihood, and identity. Maybe his family was asking him what was to become of them? How were they going to live when he got up and followed Jesus.

By 1942, Clarence Jordan had completed his PhD in New Testament studies. His way of teaching the New Testament and to practice what he had learnt was to form a racially integrated farming community in the State of Georgia, called Koinon Farm. And to support the farm they built a roadside stand to sell peanuts. It was not long before the Ku Klux Klan dynamited the stand. Clarence was one of those saints of the church who was not afraid to follow Jesus in ministry by seeking to create a just society for children of the Heavenly Father. And in creating this just society, the community rebuilt the stand. And again KKK dynamited the stand. Not to be deterred in creating a community that would be modeled for how people of different ethic backgrounds could live in harmony with each other, the community started a mail-order business. They created a catchy ad for the mail-order business to sell their peanuts. The ad read, "Help us ship the nuts out of Georgia."

Clarence had a sense of humour as well as being a great saint of the church who fought racial injustice as Jesus would have done. We best know Clarence, as the founder of Habitat of Humanity, which was born out of Koinonia Farm. He lived the words of Jesus, "A disciple is not above the teacher." To put it another way, disciples follow the teaching and example of the teacher. Here a man with a PhD in New Testament Studies who sought in his lifetime to follow Jesus in everyday ministry. He took to his soul the words of Jesus, just like we are called to do, today.

There is a change of tone in Matthew's gospel, in our reading today. Could it be that Matthew was seeing that following Jesus had a cost for him and even his family. Has he come to realize that saying he was one of Jesus disciple, has serious consequences for him and his family.

Sometimes, there is a temptation to believe that when Jesus leads us into ministry, it is going to be a time of peace, of comfort, lacking the challenges that Jesus or Matthew experienced in their ministry. Maybe our ministry is too tame. It never occurs to us that Matthew is preparing us to realize that following Jesus can be very demanding. It may even mean people may question our sanity. If they do, have a sense of humour, like Clarence.

We really do live in challenging times. In the Lord of the Rings, Frodo says to Gandalf, "I wish it need not have happened in my time." "So do I," replied Gandalf, "and so do all who live to see such times. But that is not for them to decide. All we have to decide is what to do with the time that is given us." How true that is for, even today. We live in challenging times, how are we going to live the mystery of our ministry?

Jesus said, "I did not come to bring peace, but I came to bring a sword." Strange words for us who have heard Jesus referred so often, as the 'Prince of Peace' and the person to bring peace to the world. What was Jesus saying to Matthew and the other disciples? What is Jesus saying to us today? Jesus was saying that God's peace is not maintaining the status quo of society. It is doing something to bring about God's kingdom in our communities. God's peace is the realignment of our priorities and our relationships with our neighbours. It is to see that neighbour as God sees that neighbour, a neighbour created in God's image. By not honouring our neighbour we do not honour God.

Fannie Lou Hamer, a voting rights activist who was beaten so badly in jail, she could not lie down, formed a jailhouse choir. The choir would sing: " Paul and Silas was bound in jail, let my people go. Had no money for to go their bail, let my people go. Paul and Silas began to shout, let my people go. Jail doors open and they walked out, let my people go."(Acts 16:16-40) We may not sing in a jail choir, but we do sing in a church choir " I am the Light of the world you people come and follow me. If you follow and love, you'll learn the mystery of what you were meant to be." How seriously do we take these words?

We do live in very challenging times, it is in these times that we are called to live out the mystery of our faith. To reflect on how we can again be a mission church to change the status quo of the society we live in. This will be the most important ministry task we will need to attend too. The world is watching how we the church are going to do ministry in the future. It may seem to be a great mystery to us but it is no mystery to our Jesus.

Remember how the gospel ends, Jesus said,"Lo, I am with you always, even to the close of the age."

OLD BARNS ANNOUNCEMENTS

July 5th - Sunday, 2:00-4:00pm, **Drive Through Baby Shower**, in honour of their first child, Lucas Isaias Francis Perez, parents of Jason Francis and Nohemi Perez de Francis. Location: Old Barns United Church parking lot. Any questions call or text Bob at 902-893-0801.

In an effort to keep everyone up to date during our time of physical distancing, the **Official Board** is asking that if any **committee has a report** they wish to submit, please do so by e-mailing your update to Judy Loughhead at loughheadjd@gmail.com. She will kindly include where the bulletins are listed on the charge website as *Official Board Interim Reports 2020*. Any reports received will be updated on that listing.

HILDEN ANNOUNCEMENTS

JOINT ANNOUNCEMENTS

Listen to Rev. David LeBlanc's message. It will be broadcasted each week at 9:30am Hilden time and 11:00am Old Barn time and will remain on their host system for a year.

Go to: www.mattatallvarnerfh.com

Select Church Services from the menu bars on the left,

Scroll to Hilden or Old Barns, Hilden 9:30am, Old Barns 11:00am, Click watch again.

(For those who would like Rev. David LeBlanc to mail a copy of the sermon to them, please provide their name and complete address.)

Lectionary Readings for Next Week -

Scriptures:

Message:

Worship Services - ~~SERVICES CANCELLED UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE-~~

Bookings for Hilden – contact Frank Arseneau at 902-897-4080

Bookings for Old Barns – contact Reg Henderson at 902-895-0740 or rhenderson8@hotmail.com

Bulletin Announcements – contact Judy at 902-895-7243 or loughheadjd@gmail.com by Wednesday evening

Charge Website – cliftonpastoralcharge.ca
Church bulletins are available on the website under the heading “NEWS”

Clerks of Sessions – if you need to contact the Session with any questions or concerns regarding the Spiritual Life of the church or to request a baptism or wedding, please contact your Clerk of Session:

Old Barns – Leslie Burrows 902-895-4008, **Hilden** -----

Need a Drive to Church (OB) – contact Reg at 902-895-5559 or Gordie at 902-895-6833

Social Committee (OB) – contact Kathie Chisholm at 902-895-0719

The Reverend David LeBlanc can be reach at 902-639-9301 (home) or by email at davidleblanc1@gmail.com which is connected to his cell phone.

Visitation - if you, or someone you know, want or need a pastoral care visit, please contact either the Clerk of Session or the minister, Rev. David.