**Westfield 10.30 am Robin 27th December 2020**

**Call to worship**

Father; yesterday has gone.. tomorrow, not yet arrived.. but today is a new day and we begin its hours in worship affirming that you are God.. almighty in power and gracious to those who call upon you. Accept our praise and worship for you alone are worthy. Amen.

**Hymn 178**

Go forth and tell! O Church of God, awake!

God's saving news to all the nations take:

proclaim Christ Jesus, Saviour, Lord and King,

that all the world His worthy praise may sing.

Go forth and tell! God's love embraces all;

he will in grace respond to all who call:

how shall they call if they have never heard

the gracious invitation of His word?

Go forth and tell men still in darkness lie;

in wealth or want, in sin they live and die:

give us, O Lord, concern of heart and mind,

a love like Yours which cares for all mankind.

Go. forth and tell! The doors are open wide:

share God's good gifts - let no one be denied;

live out your life as Christ your Lord shall choose,

your ransomed powers for His sole glory use.

Go forth and tell! O Church of God, arise!

Go in the strength which Christ your Lord supplies;

go till all nations His great name adore

and serve Him, Lord and King for evermore.

JAMES E. SEDDON (1915-83) CCLI 150801

**Prayers of Adoration and Thanksgiving**

Loving God, we give thanks for Your goodness, love and care towards us, for the joy of home and family, for the friends and neighbours that have helped us and cared for us in these difficult times.. for the strength you have granted us and the love that surrounds us, we give you thanks. Accept, this morning our praise and worship in Jesus name. Amen.

**The Lord’s Prayer**

**Old Testament Reading** Deuteronomy 34

**Hymn 456**

Make me a channel of Your peace.

Where there is hatred let me bring Your love;

where there is injury, Your pardon, Lord;

and where there's doubt, true faith in You.

*O Master, grant that I may never seek*

*so much to be consoled as to console;*

*to be understood as to understand;*

*to be loved, as to love with all my soul.*

Make me a channel of Your peace.

Where there's despair in life let me bring hope;

where there is darkness, only light;

and where there's sadness, ever joy.

*O Master, grant that I ......*

Make me a channel of Your peace;

It is in pardoning that we are pardoned,

in giving to all men that we receive.

and in dying that we’re born to eternal life.

CCLI 150801

**New Testament Reading** Mark 16:9-20

**Prayers of Intercession, Mission Prayer and Dedication of offering and prayer for the items on the tree..**

We bring our tithes and offerings into your house Father, and ask for wisdom in their use. Take them and us and use both in your service and for your glory.

Lord, we recall in our Word thos that brought their friend and lowered him before you that you might touch and heal.. in like manner we bring before you those who have been named and placed on our tree. Hear our prayers, written upon these cards touch, and heal, revive and save.. you are ever the same, you do not change .. meet their needs, answer our prayers and be glorified in the doing of it.. in Jesus name. Amen.

**Message**

How well do you remember sermons? I like to go home and tell Nancy what has been said.. make her feel she is not left out.. but sometimes I get home and I can’t remember what was said. Am I the only one?? So, how good it is to have them written down. Sometimes a message can resonate .. touch your very soul…to bless or to challenge (I can still remember something that Elaine said…it blessed me)…sometimes you remember a sermon because it tells of something you have not heard before.. this morning I hope you will remember it because of the most unusual text:

Joshua 1:2 “Moses, my servant is dead.”

In 1957, Nancy and I were at bible college…every week we were given two texts from which to prepare two messages.. one for a gospel meeting and one for a Sunday morning communion service. This text I remember well, I made a complete and utter mess… lack of understanding and inexperience.

So, “Moses, my servant is dead”.. but wait a minute.. this is approx.. 1450 BC.. yet we see Moses, and Elijah on the Mount of Transfiguration with Jesus.. so Moses is not dead .. (annihilated, inexistant, oblivion).. he is still ‘alive’, but in a different, far superior manner.. 1 Cor. 15:55 “O death, where is thy sting? O grave where is thy victory?” Jesus said “I go to prepare a place for you etc.therefore we must continue to exist .. heaven is not full of corpses. Mt. 22:32 God says “I am the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob”.. God is not the God of the dead but of the living.

“Moses, my servant is dead”.. here there is a pause in the narrative.. something like us.. the anticipation and actuality of Christmas is over; the new year, not yet arrived .. we are in ‘no-mans land’.. neither summat nor nowt.. the end of an era.. but what an era.. when the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob had delivered His people from the slavery of Egypt, under this man Moses.. parted the sea, given them manna from heaven, water from a rock.. their shoes did not wear out and their clothes did not fall apart (Deut. 29:5) God had promised them great things.. and they only trusted Him.

This is their past.. rich in the acts of the living God.. although the present generation had grown up in the wilderness because of their parents lack of trust.. so, we are not the generation that saw God move in this place at its beginning.. times may change, “but our God is ever the same”… and so to the second part of our text..: “Now, therefore, arise and go over this Jordan.. every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon that have I given unto you as I said to Moses” (Deut. 11:24)

The leadership may have changed.. the people have changed.. but the power and promises of God have not changed… our God is ever the same! “Hallelujah”.

They had two choices.. to stay where they were or to go with God and conquer the land.. they had no vision/no expectation of what God could and would do for them,, “Where there is no vision, the people perish” Prov. 29 causes me to think of my local preachers days in Wharfdale.. 8 chapels.. and their own superintendent.. but they had no vision.. no outreach.. no prayer meeting.. no youth work.. now only Grassington survives.. and they are struggling. They are dying off and there is no one to replace them.

A Methodist church requires three officials in order to function:- a secretary.. a treasurer and a steward.. at Kettlewell no one was willing to accept any office.. and so it had to close (no vision.. no drive.. no zeal) the superintendent was so annoyed with them, he sent me to do the honours.

Back to our Israelites:- the second choice was to accept God’s promise and to move, with Him, into the promised land.. we too can accept such a challenge to “go into all the world”.. that’s grand.. let’s start with something more manageable and work our way up.. let’s start with Wyke. (as I thought about this I thought perhaps I ought to produce some credentials). When I became Pastor at Batley they were meeting in a corrugated building on the edge of a housing estate.. the council wanted to purchase it in order to expand the estate.. and offered us an excellent piece of land right opposite Fox’s biscuit factory.. for free! I designed the building and we had it built (a whole new story) our aim was to double our numbers in 5 years.. and we did. Let me tell you some of the things we did:-

We invited local Assemblies of God and Elim Churches to help us blitz Batley with 10,000 leaflets in one Saturday afternoon.. I divided the town into areas with one of our members in charge.. as people arrived, they were taken out to these areas and posted our leaflets through the doors.. then we gave them tea and had a great rally in the evening (ask John Mudd). One elderly couple felt unable to walk around posting but wanted to take part.. after some discussion they paid for a poster to be put up in Batley bus station.. they paid for a month.. but after the month was up, nobody wanted to use the space, and it remained up for another five months until the weather brought it down.. they paid for one and got six! If we are in church I’ll bring my scrapbook and show you a photo of it. Somebody else (can’t remember who) had a cookery book compiled local shops paying to advertise in it.. they then asked us if we would distribute it.. and gave us a full page to advertise.. free! We had pencils with our advert on.. diaries made to give out.. we arranged special meetings with radio gospel singers.. all, in order to have something to invite people to.

Perhaps the things we did in the 1960’s would not work today.. but I hope you get the idea.. our God is still the same and our prayer is for the Lord to increase our numbers.. You may feel it’s all a bit too much.. in 1957 two elderly ladies (I think they were sisters in their 80’s) in the Hebrides were concerned about the youth.. drug taking and immorality in the islands and pledged themselves to pray.. doesn’t take a lot of effort but does take a lot of commitment.. God hears and answers prayer.. and a mighty revival swept through the Hebrides to the salvation of many.

The new year awaits us.. a new start, a new commitment:-

“Now therefore arise and go over this Jordan.. every place that the sole of your foot shall tread that I have given unto you..”

Let us go.. and God will go with us.

Let us say together the Mission Prayer.

**Shine come in and share what they have been doing.**

**Hymn 151**

For I'm building a people of power

and I'm making a people of praise,

that will move through this land by My Spirit,

and will glorify My precious name.

Build Your Church Lord,

make us strong, Lord,

join our hearts, Lord, through Your Son;

make us one, Lord, in Your body,

in the kingdom of Your Son.

Build Your Church Lord,

make us strong, Lord,

join our hearts, Lord, through Your Son;

make us one, Lord, in Your body,

in the kingdom of Your Son.

Dave Richards © 1977 Kingsway’s Thankyou Music CCLI 150801

**Benediction**

Now to Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy. To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.