



Our Logo of Jesus' arms extended. Draw your attention.
The simplest prayer: Help! And Jesus responds: Come to me.

The past few weeks, we have been hearing from Matthew's gospel Jesus' discourse to the apostles, those he called to "go out" and love and serve. The apostles were warned that they would face hardship and be persecuted. They would be required to make hard choices, like walking away from family, being divided from friends. Mother Alice encouraged us last week to be sure to get some rest, to fill up, get a Nature fix, in order to meet the invitation to renounce self and sustain our discipleship in the face of opposition.

Given the challenges described, who wants to sign up??? (raise hand) And yet, we are here. We must be saying Yes?? So how is this do-able?

Now the lectionary readings take us to Matthew's Chapter 11. Jesus is critical of his contemporaries – the Pharisees and religious leaders who are arrogant, judgmental and demanding so much of the people- laying heavy burdens.

Jesus in the company of the apostles offers a prayer to God, his Abba. He blesses God as Master of heaven and earth, and gives thanks that the childlike might understand what the learned do not.

Jesus then announces that He and Abba God are One. That Jesus reveals the face of God, the love of God, the wisdom of God to those Jesus chooses.

Jesus is proclaiming his God-li-ness, Son of God. He is fulfilling the description from the prophet in the first reading. Gentle, meek, humble – Not galloping in power with a chariot or a prancing horse. Coming to Jerusalem on a donkey foal. Jesus is destroying the spear, the power over, the image of a punishing God.

Jesus offers another way – a way of peace, non-violence and unconditional love.

Jesus' invitation is **not** unattainable, not too hard **IF**

IF

We take Jesus' hand,
Link arms,

Share the yoke,
Ask for wisdom
How can I love like you?
How can I serve like you?
How can I bring peace and work for justice like you?
Alone, it is too much, too hard, too heavy and burdensome.
With Jesus, it will be not only do-able, but with greater ease.
Gliding on grace.

Don't listen to all those people who fight you. The inside voices or the outside voices.
Don't focus on the obstacles and the mountains to climb.

Focus on Jesus. His life. His love. His service. His wisdom.
Every day. Moment by moment.
When we wake up, we say "Here I Am. May I do your will this day. "
At every crossroads, we say HELP –
Show me your way, your truth, your life.
When we are tired,
We pause, reach out our hand for Jesus and ask the Spirit to enliven and direct us.
The message in return may be to take a nap,
Turn to the right or to the left,
Stop
Call a friend.
Go forward in confidence – yoked to Wisdom.

When we mess up, we turn to Jesus, for guidance, encouragement and unconditional love.

Let's not be defeated by those who pour more burdens on our shoulders.
Let's shrug them off, and accept only the direction of Wisdom.

Now I have no illusion that this is easy...
But it is. There can be "ease" in the midst of challenge.
When have you learned something new, step by step?
A teacher, friend, mentor, parent, says "first do this, now do this."
Soon you've accomplished a new task or skill.
Discipleship is similar.
Gather your teachers around, predominantly the life and ways of Jesus,
And do it **His Way**.
He faced and accepted a tortuous death, without lifting a hand in opposition.
He was given the strength, the vast sacrificial love, to do so.

When you ask for direction, you will receive it.

Jesus says "Come to me."

When you don't know what to do...

Come to me.

When you are afraid...

Come to me.

When discipleship is daunting. ..

Come to me.

I am Wisdom. I am Love. Come to me.