

The word that CLEANSES the unworthy. (Matt. 8:3)

"Jesus touched him saying, I will- be thou clean... his leprosy was cleansed"

A leper socially distanced and desperately in need asked somewhat hesitantly if the Lord Jesus would He be willing to help him in his sorry state. From the text you see the immediate word "**I am**" and with a word and a touch the sores and the damaged areas caused by the leprosy all disappeared. The kind of thing we hear and see in the routines of our daily life can mar and sully our thinking and behaviour. We are all far from perfect, so we say, and do, what we should not do. John told his readers "*If we confess our sin He is faithful and just to forgive us our sin*" (1 John 1:9)." Lord , I have messed up again- will you forgive me" The answer - His simple response and statement "**I will**" followed by His cleansing and renewing touch.

The word that COMFORTS the sad Matthew 14:27

"Jesus spoke to them saying Be of good cheer, it is I, be not afraid"

The disciples caught in the storm, driven along, in danger and so very much afraid as to where will it all end. Just a word from Jesus changes everything. Everyone of us has a story to tell of how we have faced storms and despaired as to how will we manage. Even before the pandemic and certainly because of it - what a storm it has been. Listen out Jesus is passing by and He is still saying "*Be of good comfort*" to you

The word that CONQUERS US ALL

"I am he that liveth and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore"

It is all about knowing the end of the story. We have just celebrated the great message of Easter Day. The chorus is so right "*He walks with me and He talks with me And He tells me I am His own*" The word Jesus speaks into our lives conquers sin, sorrow, suffering, sadness or anything that threatens our well being. He speaks victory so we are conquerors because of Him. No wonder the instruction was "*Listen to HIM !*" His will be the ultimate and final word. So my response will be

*"Speak Lord in the stillness while I wait on Thee,
Hushed my heart to listen, in expectantly"*

DPS

SPECIAL BIRTHDAY

Joyce Fuller will be 100 years of age on 23rd April -she will be away for the occasion. Why not send her a card wishing her well and congratulations

ROCHFORD CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

Welcome to
CHURCH AT HOME
Sunday 18 April 2021

ARE YOU LISTENING

Read through this outline and join with everyone else at 11 am

HYMN MP258 (to read or sing)

I am trusting Thee, Lord Jesus
Trusting only Thee
Trusting Thee for full salvation
great and free

I am trusting Thee for pardon,
At Thy feet I bow,
For Thy grace and tender mercy
Trusting now.

I am trusting Thee for cleansing
In the crimson flood,
Trusting Thee to make me holy
By Thy blood.

I am trusting Thee to guide me;
Thou alone shalt lead,
Every day and hour supplying
All my need.

I am trusting Thee for power,
Thine can never fail
Words which Thou Thyself shall give me
Must prevail.

I am trusting Thee Lord Jesus;
Never let me fall.
I am trusting Thee for ever
And for all.

(It would be good if you said this prayer out aloud)

O God it is so wonderful to know You never change
Enable us this morning to worship with a renewed
sense of Your presence and power
Life is not easy, so many questions and issues so will
You help us get through these difficult times.
As we sit here remind us of Your love. Help us to
discover again the joy of knowing You and serving You.
AMEN *(You may like to say the Lord's prayer also).*

BIBLE VERSE FOR THE WEEK

"This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, hear ye Him"
Matthew 17:5

ARE YOU LISTENING ?

Growing old brings in its wake all kinds of issues that impress their urgency and stamp their presence upon you. They come often unannounced, often as a gradually increasing demand for your attention. Unnoticed until you suddenly discover you have a problem. It is then that you realise all the various offers and advertisements are targeted at you.

What do I have in mind ? Hearing loss.

"Dad" , "Grandad" why do you have the TV sound so loud? Answer "Is it, I didn't realise". "Excuse me, I didn't catch what you said - will you say that again please." So it goes on and you will find the person you are talking to will be quite exasperated with you, even admonish you and urge you to do something about it. "Go and get your hearing tested." Then you discover that Specsavers where you get your eyesight tested and sorted now doubles up to test your hearing and in the process want to sell you the latest aid. So faulty ability is one reason to not hear but what about the careless busyness that occupies all our energies and attention so that we are too busy to find the time to listen.

However there is another problem that has to be faced - who are we listening to ? Every announcement made in the current situation with the Covid 19 scenario seems to add and intensify confusion, fear and uncertainty. I am writing this with the lifting of some of the restrictions but

the constant hesitation and dependence on talking through the might be this or that, if we all act differently to what they say. Now the talk is of more testing and Vaccine Covid Passports. As we have listened to the voices, then fear has dominated and we are shown the impersonal statistic of more than 162,500 deaths in this country again and again. Stop, reflect on what each of those losses means to families and friends, husbands and wives, children, grandchildren and dear friends. Each is a precious person who is sadly missed. So amid all the talk my question remains - "who are we *listening to*" ?

A privileged small group -Peter, James, John had a sensational, incredible moment in their lives on a mountain place as they talked and wondered what their Master Jesus had in mind. Then it happened. It was incredible, heart stopping as Jesus changed. Right in front of them. In the twinkling of an eye, then and there, it was mysterious yet so stunningly wonderful. Jesus was "*transformed*" in front of them. His face shone like the sun, His clothes became as white as the light. (*Matthew 17:2*) but that was not all. Seeing is believing - Moses and Elijah were both there talking with Him. Then the cloud came and suddenly they heard the actual voice of God speaking. Do you know what God had to say ?

"This is My beloved Son, whom I love, with Him I am well pleased. Listen to Him! (NIV) Hear ye Him (KJV)" Are we doing that ? Do we listen to what Jesus has to say? As the years have progressed has your listening (hearing) diminished? Are you as eager today to listen out for what He has to say as you were in time past. So many other voices will pressure you, want your attention, demand your time, seek your involvement BUT "*listen to Him*".

Why ?

Jesus speaks the word that makes all the difference:

The word that CHANGES MEN. (Matt.9:2)
"your sins are forgiven you"

No one else could say that, only Jesus has the power and the authority to forgive the sins of mankind. That is the message of the Good Friday cross. When we believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, repent of our sins, make Him our Saviour and Lord then He reaches down and out to us, lifts us up, and declares "*Your sins are forgiven you*" What a change it is - the only way to describe it is to call it new birth -being born again !

So we ask the question are **we** listening when God is speaking ?