

2 LUKE - USEFULNESS *"only Luke is with me! (11)*

Read this carefully for it seems as if things are bad. For whatever reason, good or bad the others have gone but Luke has stayed around. He is one of the most self effacing men in the Bible. A brilliant man, physician, historian, diligent researcher. He wrote the book of Acts and never set a word down on paper until he had investigated the facts. Once in a while you get the "we" passages to let you know he was there. Paul needed him and relied upon him- after all he was a doctor. BUT wait a minute. Paul is in prison, the outlook is poor, he is going to die. Luke go home, build up a practice, there is still time for you to live a full life. Why will he stay? Just because he is useful. Luke is the "*instrument*" God uses again and again to prop up Paul and keep him going. Not everyone can be the preacher but everyone can be useful in some way or another.

3. MARK - FORGIVENESS *(11) Take Mark and bring him"*

Paul is quite anxious for Timothy to arrive but insists that he take as much time as is necessary in order to find Mark. In Acts 11 as the church prays for Peter's release it is in the house of John Mark. When Paul and Barnabas set out on the first missionary journey young John Mark goes with them. When they got to Pamphylia (Acts 13:13) John Mark quit and went home. Subsequently when the second missionary journey is planned (15:36-41) a row breaks out over John Mark. It was such a serious disagreement that it broke up the team. It must have been devastating for Mark to be told "You failed last time. We cannot afford to have you along". But there is always a second chance so Paul says he is "*profitable to me*". The failure was not fatal. Paul desperately needs him now.

4. PAUL - HUMANNES.

We are all human! Paul is in a prison, all his influential friends are somewhere else and he is wary of "*Alexander the coppersmith*" then says "*bring the books, and the cloak*". He is lonely, cold and bored. Surely there is a mistake here. If Jesus is Lord of all why does he feel so lonely? Isn't he being inconsiderate begging Timothy to get here as fast as he can. Anyway why is he in jail -can he not trust God for a miracle of signs and wonders? Allow me to tell you something. The grace of God does not "*dehumanise*" us. God has a place in His heart for a cold, lonely, disciple. You see *the treasure is in clay pots* so we will shed our tears, sometimes feel discouraged. We triumph because of Jesus being our strength and support NOT because we are super heroes or super spiritual

DPS

ROCHFORD CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

Welcome to
CHURCH AT HOME

Sunday 27th June 2021

ALL SORTS

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

HYMN MP 586

Saviour, Thy dying love Thou gavest me;
Nor should I ought withhold, my Lord from Thee.
In love my soul would bow,
My heart fulfil its vow,
Some offering bring Thee now
Something for Thee.

At the blest mercy seat pleading for me,
My feeble faith looks up, Jesus, to Thee.
Help me the cross to bear,
Thy wondrous love declare,
Some song to raise, or prayer,
Something for Thee.

Give me a faithful heart, likeness to Thee,
That each departing day henceforth may see,
Some work of love begun,
Some deed of kindness done,
Some wanderer sought and won
Something for Thee.

All that I am and have, Thy gifts so free,
In joy, in grief, through life, O Lord for Thee.
And when Thy face I see,
My ransomed soul shall be,
Through all eternity,
Something for Thee

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

O God from everlasting to everlasting yet here
and now with us as we meet. You are always there for us.

So we worship You afresh today.

In these difficult times You are always ready to hear us
as we cry out to You for Your favour and blessing
Help us Lord through the lives we lead to discover
again the joy of knowing You, living for You and serving You.

AMEN *(You may like to say the Lord's prayer also).*

BIBLE VERSE FOR THE WEEK

ALL SORTS

2 Timothy 4:6-10

Mention "All Sorts" and you will probably think of the box of Liquorice Allsorts - so what is your favourite ? Or do think of "*Rub a dub, dub, three men in a tub, And who do you think they be? The butcher, the baker, the candlestick maker ...*" and a childhood ditty evokes all kinds of memories, images and scenes. Read out a list of names like that and it always does and always will send you strolling down memory lane. See the obelisks on the church walls - just names - yet they tell a hundred tales of do and die, of heroism, courage, faith. Look at Simpson's plaque in the ally way - just a name - no! A sacrifice, a commitment to God, a story of one who paid the ultimate price for following Jesus Christ. These flashbacks in time tell a story for all eternity of men and women who have modelled a message for others to see and read a thousand times over.

Hosea was like that. Everybody was scandalised and surprised when he married a prostitute. Talk about the gossip that went around. They all thought he was crazy, something of a fool. They were all wrong. Hosea was one of the most patient, tender and loving of all the prophets and he was doing just what God had asked him to do. Can you imagine the "giggles" as everybody asked have you heard the latest "*Gomer just got married ... to a preacher!*". It was humiliating, insulting, full of insinuations BUT this was God's directive. See Hosea 1:2. It was humiliating because no one seemed to understand she already had two illegitimate children. It was not long before she strayed away again to her old life. Hosea, wounded and hurt hears God's voice thundering out from heaven telling

him to go find her and take her back. Which he did! It cost fifteen pieces of silver and several bushels of barley. (Hosea 3:1)

Do you know something not another person in Israel heard God's voice only Hosea. Rumours turned to ridicule and they watched open-mouthed as Hosea lovingly brought her home. Little did the people know they were watching a living object lesson designed by God to illustrate what was happening in their own lives. Just read from Chapter 4 until the end as Hosea gets their attention and begs them "*listen ... hear... return*". Some fifteen times he says it. as he pointedly tells them the truth. "*You are the harlot, you have left God's love. You have resisted His affection but He still continues to call you. Come back .. He loves you .. return to Him.*" Tragically they never did, they failed to see the point of the object lesson and three years later crumbled in the hands of the Assyrians. Will you look at the lives of four men who are modelling a message for us.

1 DEMAS - WORLDLINESS "*Demas has forsaken me*" (10)

There is something tragically sombre and sad about those words, so. We must watch out for no one gets beyond this problem and possibility, no matter how long we have been saved. No matter how long we have been in Christian service or dedicated to the Lord. None of us ever gets beyond the danger of worldliness.

Demas is mentioned in *2 Timothy 4, Philemon 24 and Colossians 4:14* as a "*fellow labourer*", a fantastic Christian at one time. None could be a colleague and associate worker with Paul without having first class credentials and having a passion, a fire, a fervour and a commitment to the Lord. He was a faithful Christian and a faithful servant. The privileges he enjoyed, the progress he experienced in the work of the Kingdom yet now he is a drop out when once he had been a spiritual leader.

The statement made is he "*loved this present world*". When you do that it leads you to make choices and here is one of them to abandon Paul. When he did, it left an empty place. Christians who are faithfully serving the Lord don't just fail overnight. We can become dazzled by the world, grow weary in well doing, reach a point when it all seems too much. In a way worldliness is a sort of identity crisis. We have spent so much time seeing life from the world of the Covid 19 experts I am concerned that some will have lost their way as far as following the Lord along with us. We will miss you as an integral part of our church life as we open up the work again.