

Sunday 22nd
September 2024
Proper 20 | Ordinary 25
The Revd Nigel Uden

Opening Words

By your grace Creator, remake us,
Carpenter, refashion us,
Companion renew us,
through Jesus Christ, Amen.

Readings

St Mark 9 30 - 37 | St Luke 24.13-35

All Ages Talk

Knowing the way to make something work is useful.

I remember my father getting agitated that he could not get a new lawn mower to work. He spent some time failing all sorts of ideas. My mother asked him if he had read the leaflet that came with it. He hadn't. The best way to get something to work is to read the instructions.

I also remember going on holiday with a friend and his parents. The driver was famed for getting lost. The shortest of journeys might include what they called a DDD – Daddy's Dreadful Detour. Just as my father didn't look at the instructions for the mower, so this man didn't read the map. The best way to reach one's destination is to read the map.

There's a clue here for our faith journey, too. One understanding of the Christian life is that it is about journeying towards God. But like Thomas, we don't always know the way. And that's where Jesus comes in. St John's Gospel suggests that Jesus describes himself as 'the way'. The way to God. In what he says to explain God's wisdom, and in the example he sets to demonstrate God's love, Jesus is the way to reach God.

And the best news of all, is that as we try to take the Jesus way towards God we will find that God is already on the way towards us, with welcome, acceptance and embrace.

It is indeed a thing most wonderful.

Sermon Notes

Theme: being on the Way

Text: Mark 9.33: 'what were you arguing about on the way?'

There are all sorts of literal ways to be 'on the way':

- a daily walk for health;

- getting to work;
- approaching retirement, or of another life's significant changes;
- the development of dementia;
- the ultimate journey into and beyond death.

Or there are metaphorical 'ways':

- a way of proceeding, or of doing something like ironing a shirt or mending a puncture;
- a way of behaving;
- discerning the way through a problem.

In the Bible's Greek, 'way' = hodos, a feminine noun, and its derivatives

It is used repeatedly of literal journeys:

- Mark 9.33 – being on the road
- Acts 8.39 – after Baptism, the Ethiopian went on his way
- I Thessalonians 3.11 – the writer trusts God and Father, 'and our Lord Jesus to direct our way to you'
- Genesis 30.36 (Septuagint) - the length of a journey, e.g. three days
- Luke 24.32 - the Emmaus Two tell of Jesus speaking with them, 'on the way'

Hodos, way, is also used in the Bible more theologically:

- Psalm 1.1 – 'Happy are those who do not follow the advice of the wicked, nor take the path that sinners tread'

the church throughout the world,

