

200621 sermon

When I started chemistry at school, the older kids taught us a little ditty, a memorial to someone who died.

*Here lies the body of Johnny Brown, his face we'll see no more  
For what he thought was H<sub>2</sub>O was H<sub>2</sub>SO<sub>4</sub>.*

I wonder when I come to the end of my life, what God will say of me?  
What will God say of you?

In All Saints' Churchyard there is a grave, with this memorial to Alfred Ranger, d. 1929. He was blind from childhood, he gave himself to serve his fellow blind people.  
Isn't that great?

I wonder what God will say of me, you?

I want God to say of me, Martin faithfully followed Jesus.

In our Gospel reading we find words spoken by Jesus to people who were called as his followers.

At Matthew 10:7-8 we see that Jesus gathered his 12 disciples, his apostles, and sent them.  
Verses 7-8.

As you go, proclaim this message: "The kingdom of heaven is near." Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons."

Go, preach the message, heal.

So, off they went. They were known as followers of Jesus; they preached the message of the K of God; they healed people and did amazing works with the authority of Jesus.

I wonder what God will say of me, you?  
Will he say, that we faithfully followed Jesus?

Many of you watching this, I expect, have been baptised. And very probably words like this were spoken to you.

Do not be ashamed to confess the faith of Christ crucified – always be loyal to Jesus  
Fight under his banner against sin, the world and the devil.  
Continue Christ's faithful soldier and servant to the end of your life.

You may not like the imagery of soldiers and fighting, but you get the idea of loyalty, obedience and 100% commitment.

I wonder what God will say of me, you?  
Will he say, that we faithfully followed Jesus?

We don't know why each of those 12 followed Jesus.

They saw the healings; they trusted him to forgive their sins; they believed he was the only hope for the nation.

Whatever, they chose to follow.

And I don't know what it was about Jesus that made you want to follow him (if that is what you have chosen to do).

Maybe you've experienced the power and presence of Jesus in your life.

Or you know he has forgiven you your sins.

Or you believe that he rose from the dead; he's Lord over all and you want to see God's kingdom come in this world.

Whatever, you've chosen to follow him.

The theme I've chosen for this sermon is, So, do not be afraid. Do not be afraid. Three times in this passage, Jesus said to those 12 followers, 'Do not be afraid'.

This wasn't about clinical fear or anxiety. We know that people do need the help of medics and psychiatrists for clinical conditions.

Here, when Jesus said Don't be afraid, he meant something like, Being reluctant.

Fear stops us from being what we can be.

Fear stops us from doing what we can do.

So, putting it very simply, what Jesus told his 12 apostles, and what he is telling us as his followers today, Don't be afraid. Don't be reluctant. Don't let anything stop you from being known as a follower of Jesus.

See the last words of verse 25.

[If the head of the house has been called Beelzebul, how much more the members of his household!](#)

They called Jesus a very rude word – Lord of the dung heap is a polite translation.

Don't be afraid. Don't be reluctant. Don't let anything stop you from being known as a follower of Jesus.

People may call you a crank, a holy Joe, narrow-minded, a do-gooder, but don't be afraid.

We can so easily be put by what other people say. But don't be afraid. Don't be afraid to be known as a follower of Jesus. Don't let anything put you off.

Of course, we always have a choice. And the choice Jesus put before his 12 apostles was a very stark choice. See verses 32 and 33.

[<sup>32</sup> 'Whoever acknowledges me before others, I will also acknowledge before my Father in heaven. <sup>33</sup> But whoever disowns me before others, I will disown before my Father in heaven.](#)

Don't be afraid. You're either with me, or you're not. Your choice.

If you're bothered about others calling you names, or mocking you or saying things, then don't bother being my follower.

But, don't be afraid. Let people say what they will – you can't stop them.

But consider

**What in the end will God say of you?**

**Will he say, that you faithfully followed Jesus?**

Every single one of us matters as a follower of Jesus. He calls us to go, preach the message and do amazing works with the authority of Jesus.

Let's not be afraid, let's not be reluctant, let's not be put off.

Most of us will never have great memorials telling the world what great exploits we did.

But what will God say of us, of you and me?

Will he say, that we faithfully followed Jesus.

I pray God to give you the mind and the determination to follow Jesus. Amen