

Sunday 27th June 2004,
Fourth Sunday after Pentecost
Rob Lamerton

Readings:

- 2 Kings 2: 1-2, 6-14
- Psalm 77: 1-2, 11-20
- Galatians 5: 1, 13-25
- Luke 9: 51-62

"Help, I need somebody,
Help, not just anybody,
Help, you know I need someone, help.

When I was younger, so much younger than today,
I never needed anybody's help in any way.
But now these days are gone, I'm not so self assured,
Now I find I've changed my mind and opened up the
doors.

Help me if you can, I'm feeling down
And I do appreciate you being round.
Help me, get my feet back on the ground,
Won't you please, please help me?

And now my life has changed in oh so many ways,
My independence seems to vanish in the haze.
But every now and then I feel so insecure,
I know that I just need you like I've never done before.

Help me if you can, I'm feeling down
And I do appreciate you being round.
Help me, get my feet back on the ground,
Won't you please, please help me.

When I was younger, so much younger than today,
I never needed anybody's help in any way.
But now these days are gone, I'm not so self assured,
Now I find I've changed my mind and opened up the
doors.

Help me if you can, I'm feeling down
And I do appreciate you being round.
Help me, get my feet back on the ground,
Won't you please, please help me, help me, help me, oh."

I'm not sure why, --- but those words came to me as I thought about today's sermon!

Words by John Lennon and Paul McCartney, but they could even be a prayer addressed to God for help in time of need --- help to get our lives back in order --- help to get us back on track!

I'm going to use the F word in my sermon today, so if you don't want to hear it, put your hands over your ears NOW! In fact I'm going to use it a number of F words!

Friendship

Ben and Fiona, Sian and Cate; your friendship in this part of the body of Christ has been a blessing.

[and from Gilgandra, welcome to...] Mike and Libby, Ann, Tim and Peter... your friendship over many years...]

[our thoughts and prayers are with] Colin and Pat Forbes are in Sydney today to be with Colin's family and his father.

and the flowers today are in memory of Marj Lowes, of whom we have such special memories.

Friendship is the way we can support and enable one another on our Christian journey --- to help each other on track.

Elisha's friendship with Elijah is so strong he will not leave even though the worst happens. Jesus calls on those who would be his friends to not look back.

Paul writes that the fruits of the spirit are to enable

relationship --- friendship among the Christian family.

The second use of the F word.

Family

As well as being friends, we need to value the blessings of our own family. When Jesus speaks to his followers about not going back to say goodbye and bury the family member, he is NOT saying abandon family, rather he is encouraging family relationships governed by our Christian calling. He calls us also to see ourselves as members of the greater Christian family where we can find the love, care and protection available in family.

Sometimes, when families are difficult or broken, we as a Christian family can provide a home!

The words Jesus addresses to his followers are almost the same as those used by Elijah to challenge his friend and successor Elisha to stay focussed... to be committed to the task.

The F word again!

Frustration

Relationships/Friendships/Family in the church can be at times **frustrating** when we are misunderstood OR fail to communicate our thoughts and feelings adequately or appropriately.

Frustration is a good word to use to describe how we feel.

The F word again!

Focus --- that's **FOCUS!**

Always our focus must be on **God AND** on all that God requires of us.

Elisha --- steadfast and faithful

Paul is concerned to ensure that relationships are grounded on Love, Joy, Peace...

- the ways of the spirit

Jesus himself sets the example being focussed on his task in Jerusalem.

I suppose the other F word would be Faith or faithfulness (in God, Friendships, Family)....

Jesus points to the need for those who would be his disciples to deal with their families in the context of his call. That God will guide us into the ways and means for us to care for our families as the disciple of Jesus.

He also points to the need to look ahead! The person doing their ploughing has to look ahead. Looking back means to go off course. That's the reason we have rear vision mirrors in cars. We need to look where we are going.

Just as Jesus "sets his face to Jerusalem" and sets off on the journey of his destiny with God, so we are to set our face towards the future and the journey God has for us, remembering:

that our **family**
our **friendship**

are sometimes **frustrating** But, are also the ways God sustains us.

and always let us keep our **focus** on the God who calls, who leads and enables.

"And now my life has changed, in oh so many ways

I'm losing focus and I look like going away

But every now and then, I feel so insecure

I know I need you like I've never done before."

Help me keep focussed!