

## Hearts on Fire: Living with Wisdom

**Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle within us the fire of your love. Send forth your Spirit and we shall be created, and you shall renew the face of the earth. O God, who by the light of the Holy Spirit did instruct the hearts of the faithful, grant that by the same Holy Spirit we may be truly wise and ever enjoy your consolations. May the words of my mouth, the meditations of all our hearts be pleasing in your sight O Lord, you who are rock, redeemer & Renewer of us all. Amen.(Ps 19:14)**

Grace and Peace be with you, dear Friends!

I'm certain you've noticed the prayer for illumination is consistent each week. I've shared that I use this prayer with intention, seeking the work of the Holy Spirit to be at work within me and within all who are present to hear the Word. But I have not discussed the final portion of the prayer. I include this ending as a GPS; (God positioning system) it seeks a humble heart and a right spirit in alignment with who I understand the Triune God to be, rock, redeemer & renewer of all. It is rooted in the final verse (14) from Psalm 19. I've heard most all Methodist preachers include it before sharing a word. Perhaps you've heard it, too. Now you know the why of the prayer I say before I speak... for my heart and yours, a humble & right spirit full of fire for the Maker of All. Hearts on Fire... a mark of Discipleship.

Disciples are more than followers. Disciples are learners. The learning process is not passive; it requires listening AND doing; taking in and responding. A Disciple is a participant and a practioner of a life in grace. Jesus demonstrated and shared this pattern of faith and life in his public life and ministry. It is a life rooted in love and empowered by a heart on fire for the kin-dom of God on earth as it is in heaven.

We are in a series, 'Hearts on Fire!' focused on the letter of James and the gospel of Mark as we explore the holy habits of discipleship which kindle and fuel our Hearts on Fire for the Lord. Today the holy habit is focused on our response, our action, our living into wisdom offered to us. James poses the first question for reflection, are we wise, understanding and with a humble lifestyle?

The scripture readings from James and Mark address the practical side of theology... walking the talk. If you'll recall, James gave an introduction to the topics he would address to the early followers of Jesus. His themes include holy habits, prayer, humility, status before God and in the world, speech, and putting faith into action. James encourages the listeners to act like Jesus in the world... with compassion, kindness, mercy & justice, caring for those in need... quick to listen, slow to speak, slow to anger...doers of the word (1:19-22).

John Wesley spent a great deal of time referencing this small letter as central for a Christian faith and life. Wesley observed that when James wrote this letter, "that grand pest of Christianity, a faith without works,' filled the Church with earthly, devilish wisdom, giving rise, not only to rash judging and evil speaking, but to 'envy, strife, confusion, and every evil work'" (sermon 61: The Mystery of Iniquity, P19).

In this section of the letter, James goes deep in the understanding that our daily lifestyle reflects our innermost priorities and character. Our speech is a window to our soul, for sure. So are other 'tempers' (Wesley's term)... such as producing quarrels, instigating conflict, selfish ambition, pridefulness; as well as demonstrating peace-making and humility.

Living into Wisdom with God or the World: Reflect on this past week for a moment: how is it with your soul – were you sowing seeds of disorder and disruption or were you sowing seeds of peace, mercy and kindness?

In moving to the gospel, remember that Jesus has already discussed his mission and his passion. Despite his teaching about the cross, the disciples miss the concept. Jesus re-defined Christ/Messiah...teaching a way different from the world: that he (*Christ, Messiah*) 'must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, chief priests, and the legal experts, and be killed, and then, after three days, rise from the dead' (v31). Then Jesus re-defines discipleship... "All who want to come after me must say no to themselves, take up their cross, and follow me." (v34). The symbol of this new discipleship is the cross, transforming an instrument of shame and suffering into an instrument of forgiveness, mercy & love.

In this story moment Jesus, yet again, redefined the meaning of discipleship and living into wisdom of God's kin-dom.

Children were of little value until they could contribute to daily life. In recognizing and drawing the child near, Jesus reminds the disciples that JOY is the standard for God's kin-dom: Jesus, Others, Yourself. We are reminded to put away pride and selfish ambition and focus on cultivating a relationship with every person, remembering each person is a beloved and treasured 'child of God'.

The call to Discipleship, taking up the cross, involves a commitment to let go of this world (its things, its ways) and participate in a life of grace (prayer, study, and action) that is prioritized with JOY and living into the wisdom of God's kin-dom. Living with JOY (Jesus first, Others as Yourself) is the pattern of a faithful life. What will you do differently this week because of this Word? How will you live with INTENTION into Wisdom and JOY?

I continue to pray daily for you (and for me) that we may live with JOY so that all may know we are Disciples of Christ with Hearts on Fire. **May the words of my mouth, the meditations of all our hearts be pleasing in your sight O Lord, you who are rock, redeemer & Renewer of us all. (Ps 19:14)** May it be so. So be it. Amen.

**Let us JOIN TOGETHER WITH THE LITURGIST, Nancy Janson, AS SHE LEADS us in prayers for God's people, church & World ...**

### May The Words Of My Mouth

*Music and Words by Rob Hill & Tim Hughes* album: Here I Am to Worship

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| Verse 1<br>May the words of my mouth<br>And the thoughts of my heart<br>Bless Your name<br>Bless Your name Jesus<br>And the deeds of the day<br>And the truth in my way<br>Speak of You speak of You Jesus | Verse 2<br>Lord will You be my vision<br>Lord will You be my Guide<br>Be my hope be my life and the Way<br>And I'll look not for riches<br>Nor praises on the earth<br>Only You'll be the first of my heart |
| Chorus<br><b>For this is what I'm glad to do</b><br><b>It's time to live a life of love that pleases You</b><br><b>And I will give my all to You</b>   | Bridge<br>I will follow<br>I will follow You<br>I will follow<br>I will follow You  |

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| <p><b>Surrender everything I have and follow You<br/>I'll follow You</b></p> | <p>(REPEAT)</p> <p>CCLI Song # 3232310<br/>Rob Hill   Tim Hughes<br/>© 2000 Thankyou Music (Admin. by Capitol CMG Publishing)<br/>For use solely with the SongSelect® Terms of Use. All rights reserved. www.ccli.com<br/>CCLI License # 2648763</p> |
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