

Title: *'Let it be done according to what YOU said'*

Date: *21st December 2014*

Scriptures: *Psalm 89:1-4 & 19-26, 2Samuel 7:1-11, 16 & Luke 1:26-38*

Prayer for the Message: Heavenly Father, Who does not alter the thing that has gone out from Your lips – we pray that the message You inspired for this morning at Grendon Methodist Church would be a word spoken in due season AND so be like ***apples of gold in settings of silver*** – like a beautiful ornament to the hearers and doers of it. Lord Jesus in Your name we pray with thanksgiving. **Amen.**

The Message: **'Let it be done according to what YOU said'**

The Lectionary sets Mary's story alongside David's plan to build a house for God – for the ark of God.

David has the right idea but his timing is wrong, building the Temple will fall to David's son, Solomon.

And I was wondering if like David, you feel there was a time when you were turned down by God?

And it may seem like a really strange thing to happen to us, to be *being turned down by God, especially* when we genuinely desire to honour God, as did David.

At last the kingdom of Israel, which the Lord God had promised to Abraham and his descendants as an **everlasting possession**, was safe and settled and David, God's chosen King had a home, a permanent home – no more tents and caves for him.

The little shepherd boy from the hills was now King of Israel and was living in a proper house, safe and secure.

And so David assumes that God would like a house too

But David has got it wrong.

There is no anger in God's tone as He speaks to the prophet Nathan and tells him to **tell His servant David** that his **offspring shall build a house for God's name and God's presence** not him.

And so I was wondering, was there a time when God turned **you** down?

You see, there was a time when God turned me down – a time when I assumed that God wanted what I wanted – and even though it was my genuine desire to honour

God – I, like David, got it wrong AND it was this self-same passage of Scripture, **2 Samuel 7** that God used to correct me.

So I hope you don't mind if I share with you some of my personal testimony?

I am absolutely useless at remembering dates. The only date I remember in history is 1066 the Battle of Hastings.

But I think it was in 2005 when the superintendent of our Circuit in South Africa asked me to consider candidating for the ordained ministry. AND, in fact, she was my second Circuit Superintendent to ask me this. I said I would go and prayerfully consider it and let her know.

On the one hand I was very content with what I was doing – I was a Local Preacher, I had officially been appointed as Pastor of Mandini Methodist Church, but I also still had time to pursue my secular job which was teaching children to swim, and instructing aqua aerobics.

But the more I considered candidating the more I assumed this was the path God was calling me to take – how could it not be *after all*, I loved serving the Lord – from day 1 of my Christian journey I wanted to serve the Lord, how, didn't matter, as long as I was serving Him – I didn't want to just warm a seat in church on a Sunday, I wanted to be **doing** for the Lord.

Also I loved/and still love His Word/the Bible and preparing a sermon brought me AND still brings me so much joy and excitement as I watch the Holy Spirit guiding the message, pruning it and grafting into it, steering it in a direction I never intended, but always ministering first to me AND then to the congregation.

How could it not be God's will – and 2 not 1, but 2 ordained ministers had said they believed ordained ministry was what the God was calling me to.

However, I felt this little niggle inside, I didn't have absolute peace about it **and so** I asked a friend, who I respected spiritually a great deal what she thought and would she pray about it with me?

Immediately she said it didn't feel right, but assured me she would pray.

I was scheduled to give my testimony to my calling to ordained ministry at the Circuit meeting on Saturday morning – during that week one of my daily devotional readings was our Old Testament reading from **2Samuel 7** and when I read it, I knew, that I knew that the Lord was speaking to me, **God** did not want me to become an ordained minister in the Methodist Church.

Candidating for ministry seemed like a very good idea *but* it was not a **God idea!**

And so on the Saturday morning I arrived at the Circuit meeting to share that the Lord was in fact not calling me to candidate for the ordained ministry of Presbyter. I

was reminded of the words we say in our Covenant service, **'let me be employed for You OR laid aside for You.'**

And we wonder how anything we want to do for God as Christians and as the Church **cannot be His will** and yet experience tells me that is sometimes the case – as does our Old Testament reading from **2Samuel**.

For me to become Rev. Gill Judge was not what was written in God's book for my life – it was not one of God's good plans for my life – it was not a good work that the Lord predestined for me – it was not a path God prepared ahead of time for me to walk in.

And possibly that is why some things we do for the Lord don't bear any fruit *because* they are not part of what God has planned for us, He has something else for us.

How often don't we decide to do something, like *a luncheon club* for instance and we ask God to bless our *luncheon club* instead of asking the Lord to allow us to be a part of what **He is blessing**.

Mary said to the angel Gabriel, **'Behold, I am the handmaiden of the Lord; let it be done to me according to what you have said.'** NOT what she said, but what God said.

And that reminds me of something else we say in the Covenant Service, **'Put me to what YOU will.'**

And it was God's will that I candidate for the Ordained ministry of Deacon – not only did I have such peace in my heart about becoming a Deacon, but the Lord opened and closed doors assuring that nothing hindered His call upon my life. *I believe in 2006 the economy declined quite radically – well I can tell you that was God's doing because He didn't want us moving to England until I was ordained.*

I suppose what we need to recognise is that our priorities are not necessarily God's. After all God does say in **Isaiah 55** that His thoughts are not our thoughts, neither are our ways His ways, says the Lord.

Having read the scriptures for this morning, I felt like I wanted to go and stand in the middle of the quad in front of St Martin's and shout to the Lord, *'Behold, I am Your handmaiden Lord, let it be done to me, and to St Martin's according to what You have said Lord.'* Nor according to what we want or think best but according to what You have planned and purposed for us.

And what God has in mind might sound impossible to us but the angel Gabriel assured Mary and assures us that ***nothing is ever impossible with God and no word from God shall be without power or impossible of fulfilment.***

Mary does not demand to know what God hopes to achieve – she does not ask what it will cost – she does not demand praise because she is the one God is asking – she simply says **‘Yes.’**

Shall we all sit for a moment in quietness and say to the Lord as Mary did, *‘Behold, I am Your servant Lord, let it be done to me and our church according to what You have said Lord. Put us to what YOU will.’*

PAUSE

Heavenly father, thank you, that Your idea of time is very different from ours. We find it difficult to be still and patient, to take the time to really be aware of Your presence in our lives. As You said, ‘No’ to David, help us to understand that sometimes you say ‘No’ to us because the time just isn’t right for what we have in mind. As Mary said ‘Yes’ to You, help us to be ready to go where you send us, even if it means staying right here. **Amen.**