



SUNDAY 9 SEPTEMBER 2018

DIOCESE OF Hexham & Newcastle

The Parishes of: Bishop Auckland || Newton Aycliffe & Shildon || Willington
Crook, Tow Law & Wolsingham || Tudhoe || Coundon, Ferryhill & Windlestone

ESCOMB PARTNERSHIP NOTE

23rd Sunday of the Year

Imagine not being able to hear the range of feeling in a human voice, the wonderful world of music, the alarms and sirens of traffic and a host of sensations that hearing people take for granted. Today hearing aids can make a difference some describe as miraculous.

Our Gospel story this Sunday tells of Jesus giving hearing and speech to a man deprived of both. It's a beautiful example of the Lord's sensitivity.

Watch him. He begins signing to this man immediately. He first takes him aside in private, away from the crowd. He's signalling that he is giving the whole of his attention to this man, avoiding any external distraction. He touches that man's ears and then does something you and I would not do - with his own spit he touches the man's tongue. He is giving the man speech from his own speech, freedom to speak from Jesus' own facility with words. Only then does he signal he is praying - raising his eyes to heaven and calling for ears to be opened and speech to flow. And they do.

Go through the Gospels. Watch Jesus interacting with individuals. There is no 'one size fits all'. He engages with each person differently and in ways that reach home. To the fishermen disciples he catches huge shoals of fish and calms a storm at a word. This challenges their life's work experience. To Thomas he offers his pierced hands and feet. He hugged lepers. Mary Magdalen knew the risen Jesus by the way he spoke her name. Examples demonstrate the heart and thoughtfulness of a brilliant communicator.

So how does he touch you? In what ways does the Son of God show he loves you - in ways that are personal, tailored to you and, hopefully, crafted so you get it. Sisters and brothers, we are understood and deeply loved. We don't learn this only once, but over and over again. Dare to ponder how Jesus comes across to you, to let you know how much you matter.

Thanks be to God.



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Our Partnership is first about getting together. We have so much to discover about following Jesus as his disciples today in this crazy, beautiful world, but we learn better when we share together. There are two important gatherings at the back end of this week:

- * **On Friday evening David Wells will be talking to us again at St John's School. We'd love you to be there. David has a great way of getting the message across. Come with your mates at 6.30 for 7 pm. Tickets (including food) are available through your parish at 2 pounds each. Get yours before they disappear.**
- * **On Saturday we have a Discipleship Conference at Sacred Heart School, Fenham, Newcastle, NE4 9YH from 10 am to 3.30 pm. There will be workshops on different themes and you can sign up in advance for one in the morning:**

- ♦ **Spirituality: Ensuring prayer is at the centre**
- ♦ **Life long formation for all: we never throw away the 'L' plates**
- ♦ **A church for young people**
- ♦ **The Ministry of Money and developing stewardship, finances at diocese, partnership and parish level**

and another workshop in the afternoon:

- ♦ **Making Partnership a reality**
- ♦ **The Art of Accompaniment**
- ♦ **Leading our Partnership from a place of faith**
- ♦ **The Property and Community Review (how we use our resources).**

Do come with us - David Wells will be talking at this event also. Book online at: www.partnershipconference2018eventbrite.co.uk or telephone 0191 2433316.

Big thanks

***Be thou a bright flame before me,
Be thou a guiding star above me,
Be thou a smooth path below me,
Be thou a kindly shepherd behind me,
Today - tonight - and forever***

St Columba, c.521-97