

*Let us consider today our place within this scripture.  
A person next to Christ. A person in that place at that time.  
I wonder whether it felt like this:*

I am dumbstruck.  
I am stuck to the spot and I don't know what to do next.  
I don't know what to say. My words have failed me.  
I have heard him say some pretty incredible things that have left me quiet but this has stopped me.  
Shocked me to the core.

But who am I that he would speak of me like that. Who am I for him to call me friend. And in calling me friend He calls me brother.  
I thought we were following, I thought we were catching the coat tails of someone with power to speak and the spirit to heal and and...the presence to bring peace into lines of people and the lives of all he touched.

I thought we were helping, like holding our own, holding court, holding back the crowds.  
But now he calls us friends. But who am I.

Am I something special, no more special than the rest.  
Am I more than others see me. Am I more than I see in myself.

But he sees me, from my heart to my thoughts and back again to my questions and questions that lead nowhere but also to the questions that seek to unlock what he is saying.

And today I am blown away by what he says - not just to the throng around and the thousands craning in to hear, the communities of folk clambering and climbing to see him walk past, to hear a word that might be for them as much as it is me. And they question 'who is he?'

Time ago he scooped us up and set us on a path that none of us had ever dreamed of.

Time ago we were working our hearts out for not much more than pay and local limelight. A sweat borne out of work and an empty feeling of self-worth but his word is new and he called to us and said 'You'

And from that time on we've walked and talked and at each place he has affirmed our sacrifice.

At each time we have learned and understood some more he has affirmed our trying ways.

Yet with each step, each time we step out in faith, each step towards being like Him - he affirms us for who we are not what we do.

He gently places his hand on us and smiles into our eyes so deep and affirms our inner most being and our self-worth just rests in his perfect peace.

He speaks of love but not in any way I've heard before.

A love that scoops up and blesses and sends it upon its way to multiply and spread.

He talks about our Father and in this he calls us kin.

He speaks of a creator that wants to burst out from our within.

And so I am here numb. dumbstruck and in awe - of being called friend, brother, kin.

Of being called by him.

Now we've been called before by people who didn't know my name.

We've been called before to do jobs and tasks and stay the same.

But this is different.

This is discipling in Jesus' name.

We've been apprenticed to just one man, to the one who calls us to use our hands. Who shows us how to touch and heal. How to spread his love at every meal.

But until today it was like that was just work. Just a job that takes your life, that calls us to take up the fight. To share the love that he shared with us. Who are we? It's what he calls us to be.

So we breathe and think of what to do now. Not as a worker but as family.

Not as slave but as sibling.

Because each day that he teaches us is a day when we know him more, a day when we see the Father clearer.

And we might feel it rising in us. That self-worth that comes only from the Father we call God. That Identity that he calls us children. It speaks to who we are? It speaks to more than just my ears but all my fears. And his words just soothe because His love, his perfect love drives out all fears. His way dries up the tears and his future wipes away the years that we have spent not knowing. The times we have spent not choosing, the way that he wants us to go.

His children. His child.

It is not just about all of us. A crowd gathering out of the worlds weary rain.

It is you. It is me. It is individually an invitation and a word of love. The child God wants so much to join him.

And as his child we, you and I, are chosen and anointed.

Given the name and inheritance that God promises to those who follow in his wake.

Called to be like Him. Called to be like his son.

So we sit and wait and listen for his word.

As a child of God we have rights and responsibilities.

As a child of God we have resources and a response to make.

Will you follow and call on his name?

Will you weave your life into his, fashion your desires into his wishes and delight in the work of His spirit.

Will you call to mind those stories when as God's child he gave you gifts and worked his miracles?

Will you call yourself a child of God and accept the love and the Holy Spirit that God gifts his children? Amen

Let us Pray:

Heavenly Father you call us your children - may we be blessed through your Spirit to call others into your family.

Lord Jesus you call us friends who know the father's wishes - may you make us ever watchful for him moving in our lives and communities.

Holy Spirit you call us into relationship with Father Son and Spirit - may you guide us in the ways of faith and strengthen us to live as children of your kingdom.

Amen.