

Newsletter August 29, 2021

Sunday's Readings: Mark 7:1-8 ,14-23

Andrew Everson will be bringing us the Word this week

Prayers of the people

- Please continue pray for Afghanistan, for the people who are afraid of what the change of government will mean for their lives. Pray for their safety and future.
- Please pray for the people of Victoria and NSW as endure strict lock down. Please pray for their mental wellbeing and the livelihoods of so many. Pray for our country and the areas that are still having outbreaks. Also pray that those who make the decisions will be wise and compassionate.
- Give thanks for the Youth Alpha camp held last week. Pray for the continuing work of the Holy Spirit in the lives of the young people.
- Give thanks that we are blessed by living in a safe area and are well.
- Please continue to pray for Rosalie Hinch as she copes with health issues and is undergoing tests, pray for improved health and recovery.
- Please pray for John Ruck who would appreciate prayers for healing
- Please continue to pray for our Pastor Andrew as he undergoes tests this week

Notices

Thank you to those who share the produce of their garden, it is very much appreciated.

Congratulations to John and Judy Stafford who celebrated their 50th anniversary last week.

End of month luncheon: Please join in for fellowship and a meal on Sunday the 29th at Billy Mac's, let us know for numbers on Sunday morning for bookings

Pastoral Care Fundraiser Early Notice BBQ to be held in September

Church Service: Due to Covid 19 the guidelines for Sunday are as follows.

- Masks must be worn
- 1/2m² distancing applies (**101** persons in the church so we may not need the hall, although that will be available)
- Singing allowed with masks on.
- No Morning Tea
- Sunday school and Youth Alpha is on!

Roster: Oriel will be drawing up the next roster please let her know if you can help in anyway or when you may not be available. We have missed the fellowship of morning tea and if this to resume when covid19 permits we will need people to put up their hand to enable this to happen. If anyone would be willing to help Helen Turner sometimes with Holy Communion that would be also appreciated. We still need to be prepared as restrictions are constantly changing

Tarooki: Please join us to celebrate 61 years of camping in Robe. Onsite at 55 Main St. Robe on Sunday November 14th, 2021, at 10.30am for a Thanksgiving Service followed by a catered lunch. RSVP to tarooki@uvsa.org.au or 0429157270 by November 1st.

Barnabas Fund news: Below is some good news from the funds monthly bulletin

Somaliland – Christians released after offences-against-Islam charges dismissed

A group of Christians in the self-declared Republic of Somaliland has been released from detention after charges against them relating to offences against the state religion of Islam were dismissed.

Among them were Mohamed and Hamdi, a couple who were arrested with their new-born baby in January 2021.

In April, six Christian converts from Islam were charged with apostasy, teaching and spreading Christianity, as well as inciting others to commit public-order offences.

In a hearing at a regional court in Hargeisa, the capital city, on 5 August the court dismissed all charges. Mohamed, Hamdi and others were released immediately.

Praise the almighty Lord for answering prayers for the release of our brothers and sisters in Somaliland (Luke 11:10). Thank Him for revealing the emptiness of the authorities' case against them (Psalms 146:7). Ask for peace and strength for Mohamed and Hamdi, freed at last together with their baby, the Christians who endured beside them in jail and the tiny Christian minority in Somaliland. Pray they weep no more (Isaiah 30:18-19).

Update Information:

There are forms at the back of the church to update any changes of details or for new members to fill in for name tags and to receive our newsletter by email.

Midweek Bible reading:

James 1:16-27

New Century Version

¹⁶ My dear brothers and sisters, do not be fooled about this. ¹⁷ Every good action and every perfect gift is from God. These good gifts come down from the Creator of the sun, moon, and stars, who does not change like their shifting shadows. ¹⁸ God decided to give us life through the word of truth so we might be the most important of all the things he made.

Listening and Obeying

¹⁹ My dear brothers and sisters, always be willing to listen and slow to speak. Do not become angry easily, ²⁰ because anger will not help you live the right kind of life God wants. ²¹ So put out of your life every evil thing and every kind of wrong. Then in gentleness accept God's teaching that is planted in your hearts, which can save you.

²² Do what God's teaching says; when you only listen and do nothing, you are fooling yourselves. ²³ Those who hear God's teaching and do nothing are like people who look at themselves in a mirror. ²⁴ They see their faces and then go away and quickly forget what they looked like. ²⁵ But the truly happy people are those who carefully study God's perfect law that makes people free, and they continue to study it. They do not forget what they heard, but they obey what God's teaching says. Those who do this will be made happy ("blessed").

The True Way to Worship God

²⁶ People who think they are religious but say things they should not say are just fooling themselves. Their "religion" is worth nothing. ²⁷ Religion that God accepts as pure and without fault is this: caring for orphans or widows who need help, and keeping yourself free from the world's evil influence.

Living like a Christian

The German theologian, writer, pastor, and martyr Dietrich Bonhoeffer said that when we are thinking about theology, the main question to ask is *who* rather than *how*.

We first must know *who* God is and *what* he has done, and is doing, before we can answer the *how* question. And then we see the incredible relevance of the gospel to every area of life.¹

So, in his letter James first describes *who* God is, describing him as the creator of the universe ("the sun, moon, and stars, who does not change like their shifting shadows"), the one constant in a changing world.

And the one who, as a deliberate act of love and purpose gave us life, and not just physical life, but eternal life through "the word of truth". The word of truth is of course Jesus. The wonderful chapter 1 prologue to John's gospel tells us that: "the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ" (John 1:17). And by sending us Jesus, God makes us the most important of all of his creations.

¹ James B. Torrance, *Worship, Community and the Triune God of Grace*, IVP Academic, 1996

So, this is the *who*, that James says we need to get straight before we can possibly deal with the *how* of living like Christians.

And, even when we consider *how* we are to do this the question of *who* still tends to dominate.

For example: “Every good action and every perfect gift is from God” so it is “God’s teaching that is planted in your hearts (by God) which can save you”. Just as it is “God’s perfect law that makes people free”.

Our personal response to this grace is itself given to us by God. It is God’s gift of the Holy Spirit to us that enables us to respond to God’s grace with gentleness, self-control, and to get rid of anything that grieves God.

James says that we should be slow to get angry because “anger will not help you live the right kind of life God wants”.

Feeling angry itself is not sinful. There are things in this world that if they did not make us angry, we should question our commitment to truth and justice. God himself feels anger, as the Bible repeatedly makes clear. But he is slow to anger and acts with justice and mercy.

So too, we are to listen and be slow to respond in anger, “In your anger do not sin. Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry” (Ephesians 4:26).

Our personal response to all things is itself a gift of God’s grace. This is why, for example, Paul says he has nothing to boast about. Because there is nothing good in him that was not placed there by the Spirit of God. To use the analogy that James uses above, Paul didn’t forget what he really looked like in the mirror.

James summarises what God is looking for as: “Religion that God accepts as pure and without fault is this: caring for orphans or widows who need help and keeping yourself free from the world’s evil influence”. Of course, these are examples of our obligations to others and our obligation to God, to be loyal to him.

The Holy Spirit is active in our world, and through the Spirit, God is creating the kind of people who please him. God is making generous people. Generous in the way they deal with others – generous with their listening; generous with their time; generous with what they have. These are humble people who don’t forget what they really look like. Trustworthy people who know *who* God is.

Andrew

