

Newsletter

23rd May 2021

Sunday's Reading Acts 2:1-41

Ps. Andrew Everson will bring us the word this week.

Some Prayers of the people

- Give thanks for our town and state and the leaders who make decisions on our behalf, may they be wise and guided by God.
- Please pray for Graeme and Sue Kuchel as they face a continuing battle with Sue's health. Pray that God will supply the strength, comfort, and resources that they need.
- Give thanks for the freedom to worship as we do. Remembering that there are many Christians around the world who are persecuted for their faith we ask for their protection and for courage and perseverance. We pray for the Religious Freedom weekend on June 11th- 13th for all churches to unite in prayer for the persecuted around the world. See the link:
www.religiousfreedomweekend.com.au
- Please continue to pray for the countries of the world who are struggling with massive numbers of covid19 cases daily, in particular the desperate situation in India. Give thanks for our safe country.

➤ Prayer Chain

The church has a prayer chain for those who need prayer during an emergency or crisis, the Initial contact people are Julie Wylie (87623812) or Julie & Kevin Cooke (87620732, 0428620733). Please call the contact person and your prayer request will be forwarded on. We encourage you to share any answer to prayer that you feel you can to the prayer chain as encouragement to them.

Marriage Course

The updated Marriage Course has new teaching content, creative short films, global stories, and expert insights –hosted by Nicky & Sila Lee.

7 episodes of the Marriage Course:

- Strengthening Connection
- The Art of Communication
- Resolving Conflict
- The Power of Forgiveness
- The Impact of Family
- Good Sex
- Love in Action

<https://youtu.be/qba2wYpXgUs>

Contact Andrew 0417 811 773, Simone 0425 809 760 or Robbie 0455 663 556

Thank You, Rosalie and Trevor would love to thank the body of believers and all the faithful prayer warriors and all the lovely ladies who provided physical and spiritual support during Rosalie's illness and all men and ladies in their support of Trevor. Both Trevor and I give all glory to God our Saviour. Amen

“Tithe a tin Pray a packet”: Thank you to all who generously give to the church pantry cupboard. Along with the Naracoorte Community Care network who generously give vouchers and donations we assist people who are struggling. NCCN have provided a list of suggestions for those who may be wondering how to help. Bless you for your care and generosity.

Name tags: As our congregation is growing, please wear your name tags as this will help people get to know each other and also help with remembering names. Please let Lois or Teresa know if anyone requires a name tag.



AND



ITEMS REQUIRED FOR FOOD ASSISTANCE

Long life Milk	Canned Vegies
Cans of Spaghetti or Baked Beans	Kids Snacks (Muesli Bars, etc.)
Cereal	Sugar
Pasta	Tins of Fruit
Bolognaise Sauce	Rice Cream
Pasta Sauces	Custard
Biscuits	Cake Mix
Cups of Soup	Tea
Jams. Spreads etc.	Coffee

OTHER ITEMS THAT WOULD BE APPRECIATED:

Nappies	Soap
Shampoo	Toothpaste
Toilet Paper (pkts of 2 – sealed)	Toothbrushes
Sanitary Items	Tissues

Cash or Gift cards from Woolworths or Foodland –
To be used to purchase things like formula, Panadol etc.
as required under special circumstances.

NOTE:

Please try and keep the 'use-by' dates to 3 - 6 months.

Mid-Week Bible reading

Ezekiel 37:1-14

The Valley of Dry Bones

37 The hand of the Lord was on me, and he brought me out by the Spirit of the Lord and set me in the middle of a valley; it was full of bones. ² He led me back and forth among them, and I saw a great many bones on the floor of the valley, bones that were very dry. ³ He asked me, “Son of man, can these bones live?”

I said, “Sovereign Lord, you alone know.”

⁴ Then he said to me, “Prophesy to these bones and say to them, ‘Dry bones, hear the word of the Lord! ⁵ This is what the Sovereign Lord says to these bones: I will make breath^[a] enter you, and you will come to life. ⁶ I will attach tendons to you and make flesh come upon you and cover you with skin; I will put breath in you, and you will come to life. Then you will know that I am the Lord.’”

⁷ So I prophesied as I was commanded. And as I was prophesying, there was a noise, a rattling sound, and the bones came together, bone to bone. ⁸ I looked, and tendons and flesh appeared on them and skin covered them, but there was no breath in them.

⁹ Then he said to me, “Prophesy to the breath; prophesy, son of man, and say to it, ‘This is what the Sovereign Lord says: Come, breath, from the four winds and breathe into these slain, that they may live.’” ¹⁰ So I prophesied as he commanded me, and breath entered them; they came to life and stood up on their feet—a vast army.

¹¹ Then he said to me: “Son of man, these bones are the people of Israel. They say, ‘Our bones are dried up and our hope is gone; we are cut off.’ ¹² Therefore prophesy and say to them: ‘This is what the Sovereign Lord says: My people, I am going to open your graves and bring you up from them; I will bring you back to the land of Israel. ¹³ Then you, my people, will know that I am the Lord, when I open your graves and bring you up from them. ¹⁴ I will put my Spirit in you and you will live, and I will settle you in your own land. Then you will know that I the Lord have spoken, and I have done it, declares the Lord.’”

This vision of Ezekiel is a powerful image. It speaks of the transformation of desolation, waste, and despair into vibrant hope and new life.

Ezekiel’s vision is a parable, a dramatic allegory of God’s promise to his people to bring them back from captivity, from exile in Babylon and to reinstate them as a people and a nation in their own land.

It’s a vision that speaks of forgiveness. And it speaks of the power and intention of God.

In the previous chapter of Ezekiel, the prophet declares God’s word to his people and says:

²⁴ For I will take you out of the nations; I will gather you from all the countries and bring you back into your own land. ²⁵ I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols. ²⁶ I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. ²⁷ And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws. ²⁸ Then you will live in the land I gave your ancestors; you will be my people, and I will be your God.

This is the restoration that God will make for his people. The vision given to Ezekiel where the dry bones are restored to life is a reinforcement of this same message. But why was this restoration necessary? It was necessary because God had caused his people to be driven into exile. This was the result of

generations of ungodly behaviour on the part of his people and the climax to a situation that God could tolerate no longer.

God tells the people in Ezekiel 36: 17

...when the people of Israel were living in their own land, they defiled it by their conduct and their actions...¹⁸ So I poured out my wrath on them because they had shed blood in the land and because they had defiled it with their idols. ¹⁹ I dispersed them among the nations, and they were scattered through the countries; I judged them according to their conduct and their actions...

²² 'Therefore say to the Israelites, "This is what the Sovereign Lord says: it is not for your sake, people of Israel, that I am going to do these things, but for the sake of my holy name, which you have profaned among the nations where you have gone. ²³ I will show the holiness of my great name, which has been profaned among the nations, the name you have profaned among them. Then the nations will know that I am the Lord,

If one has an atheistic world view is impossible to believe that the world, it's past, present, and future has any intrinsic, lasting purpose to it, only temporary values, like avoiding present-day suffering and making things as pleasurable as possible in the here and now. Without the intention of a creator, nothing in this complex, beautiful universe has any lasting purpose at all.

But that's simply impossible to believe. That's not how life is really lived. There is a persistent urgency about the way people actually live life. All life on earth shows a striving towards some objective, even if we can't say what it is. And this wonderful universe shows purpose in its very structure – down to the intricate structure of its atoms and the vastness of its galaxies.

On the other hand, if we know that this is God's world, then even the events that cause suffering in this life are infused with purpose. It is very liberating, I think, to realise that God is intervening in the world in order to achieve his purposes. It frees us from a fixation on our own trouble. It avoids both an unhealthy belief that it is all up to us, (an impossible burden), or the equally despairing idea that there is nothing we can do because it is all simply chance.

Realising that God has superintendence in his world places us in the right relationship with him. And it is important to realise that what God does, he does for his own sake, and because of his love for his creation.

We might think that the universe rotates around us but actually we, and the rest of creation, exist for God's purposes.

It's not about you. It's actually not about you.

It's about God. And realising this is surely the first step in learning to worship God rather than ourselves or some other idol.

When God restores his people, it is an act of grace, it is an act of forgiveness, and it is an act that rests entirely with God.

It's an act of recreation and an act of cleansing -

²⁵ I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols. ²⁶ I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you... ²⁸ Then...you will be my people, and I will be your God.