

**Newsletter      25 July 2021**

The **lectionary readings** for this Sunday are: 2 Sam 11:1-15, Ps 14, Eph 3:14-21 and Jn 6:1-21

**No Service on Sunday the 25<sup>th</sup> of July due to Covid19 restrictions**

**Some Prayers of the people**

- Please pray for the Barnabas Fund as they work in Myanmar. The Christians there are being persecuted by the Tatmadaw and driven from their homes living in the jungle or displaced persons camps with hardly any possessions. Some of the camps have also being attacked.
- Pray for our country as we battle with new outbreaks of Covid19. Particularly pray for the spiritual and mental health of everyone in extended lockdown.
- Please continue to pray for Dave and Lil Barnett and their work on the Pitjantjatjara Bible translation and the distribution of Bibles and scripture through the APY lands.

**Notices**

**Luncheon:** Due to Covid19 the end of month luncheon is cancelled

**Fundraiser:** A fundraiser lunch for the Youth Camp will be held after church on Sunday the 1<sup>st</sup> of August soup, sandwiches and crumble. Adults \$10 and family concessions

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

**Dan Fennell** has written a book "The World of the Word. Discipleship from Moab to Macedonia" and it is available to purchase for \$15.00. If you would like a copy, please contact Teresa or Dan (jdfennell98@gmail.com or phone 0413660092)

If you have any news you wish to share, please let us know so we may celebrate or pray and offer support for you.

## Midweek Bible reading:

### Ephesians 3: 14-21

### Paul's prayer for the church in Ephesus

<sup>14</sup> For this reason I kneel before the Father, <sup>15</sup> from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name. <sup>16</sup> I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, <sup>17</sup> so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, <sup>18</sup> may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, <sup>19</sup> and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

<sup>20</sup> Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, <sup>21</sup> to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.

All language is metaphorical. That is, language that is written or spoken is not the thing itself, it simply points to the subject under discussion. The author uses words or a way of describing something that is common to both the writer or speaker and his or her audience. In this way the author tries to convey meaning.

When we talk about God the difficulty in finding common language is more acute. How do we finite human beings describe something or someone who is infinite, outside of our space and time, the measure of all goodness and truth, and the reason for everything that is? We can only do this by using metaphors drawn from our common human experiences, but in doing so, we need to acknowledge how limited language is when we try to describe the indescribable.

In the passage above, Paul's first metaphor is to describe God as Father. This goes right back to Jesus who talked about God as his Father and even taught us to pray "to **our** Father in heaven. And God is our Father. We use this metaphor knowing that God is so much greater than any human father, but like any good human father he loves us, cares for us, protects us and provides for us.

But Paul uses the term "Father" in another sense that was clearer in his day. He describes God as the Father "from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name". In the society that Paul was part of the father was indisputably the head of the family which bore his family name. So, for Paul to describe God as the Father of every family, points to God's role as the creator of all humanity and to God's creation of "family" itself as the human relationship that creates, nurtures, and sustains life. We are all made in the image of God and all families are in this sense fathered by God.

So, it is to this Father, the source of all life and purpose, that Paul kneels in prayer, acknowledging just who God is. This is where this metaphor takes us. And it is knowing how great God is, and what a generous, loving "Father" God is that allows Paul to ask for a particular grace for the church at Ephesus. Paul asks for a powerful intervention in their

lives so that God's Spirit, working within the deepest parts of their hearts and minds (their "inner beings") would so transform them, that Christ himself was living in there. That is, through Spirit empowered faith, God's image in them would become totally effective. God's "Fatherhood" and the church in Ephesus' "sonship" would become totally real, totally operative.

Paul then changes the metaphor to liken the worldwide church, "all the Lord's holy people", to a growing plant, established in the deep soil of God's love. The transformation and the growth in us, flows completely out of God's grace. This is how it works. This is not something that we ourselves do. It is something that flows to us from the depth of God's love.

So, Paul prays that out of God's grace he may allow us to know just "how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ". That is Paul prays not only that we grow through God's love, but he prays that we know that it is the depth of that love that brings this grace to us.

But even more, Paul prays that any "knowledge" we have of this love is surpassed by our ability to really "know" this love – and this can only mean "to know" in the sense that we think and feel and do and love in the same way that Christ does. This is not just "head knowledge" but "heart knowledge" as well. And when, through God's grace we are transformed in this way then we are indeed "filled to the measure of all the fullness of God"!

If we really meditate on this and begin to see the vision that Paul is praying for the Christians at Ephesus and for all of God's people, a vision in which through God's love and grace, his glory becomes the inheritance of all God's people, then we are surely driven to pray with Paul:

"Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever!

Amen.