

Newsletter 11th June 2021

Sunday's Readings **Corinthians 5: 1-19**

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

Some Prayers of the people

- Please continue to pray for those in our community who are battling chronic health issues. Pray that God will supply the strength, comfort, and resources that they need.
- Give thanks for the Barnabas Foundation who are working in India. The health workers are struggling under the overwhelming conditions of lack of supplies and PPE and lack of electricity to run medical equipment. The Barnabas Fund are working to supply PPE, generators, and equipment to set up Covid care centres.
- 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 pray for people of Victoria as they struggle with covid 19. Pray for good political and medical leadership. Pray for the leaders and medical people as the world looks for an end to this pandemic.

➤ **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.

Notices

Roster: The next roster is being prepared, please let Oriel know of any dates you are not available or if you can help in any way. We all enjoy our cuppa and fellowship after church, but we need people who are willing to serve on the roster to help run our church smoothly so please prayerfully consider how we may serve one another.

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.

Update Your details: please let the office know if there any changes to details that we may not have, thank you.

Midweek Bible reading

Mark 4:26-34

The Parable of the Growing Seed

²⁶ He also said, “This is what the kingdom of God is like. A man scatters seed on the ground. ²⁷ Night and day, whether he sleeps or gets up, the seed sprouts and grows, though he does not know how. ²⁸ All by itself the soil produces grain—first the stalk, then the head, then the full kernel in the head. ²⁹ As soon as the grain is ripe, he puts the sickle to it, because the harvest has come.”

The Parable of the Mustard Seed

³⁰ Again he said, “What shall we say the kingdom of God is like, or what parable shall we use to describe it? ³¹ It is like a mustard seed, which is the smallest of all seeds on earth. ³² Yet when planted, it grows and becomes the largest of all garden plants, with such big branches that the birds can perch in its shade.”

³³ With many similar parables Jesus spoke the word to them, as much as they could understand. ³⁴ He did not say anything to them without using a parable. But when he was alone with his own disciples, he explained everything.

Five simple truths:

1 Our task is to plant the gospel.

We are responsible for planting the gospel. That’s our job.

- Through the way we live.
- Through the way we accept that our lives needed to change, and we allow God to change us.
- Through the way we speak the truth of the Bible, even when it offends. Because while to speak truth is sometimes offensive, without it no one can be free. (Actually, speaking the truth is what got Jesus himself killed and it may prove difficult for us in this life as well)
- Through the way we are prepared to give generously, and give of ourselves to help others.
- Through the way we speak and teach and preach and share the gospel.
- Through the way we pray for ourselves and for others.

In all these ways we plant the gospel. Sometimes in safe places and sometimes in hostile environments; sometimes in good soil and sometimes in poor soil.

2. **We are not responsible for the growth of the Kingdom.**

That's up to God. And frankly, that's a huge relief! The growth of the Kingdom is something that the Holy Spirit does as He moves in the lives and the hearts and minds of people. So, we shouldn't feel anxious or guilty or stressed about whether or not God's Kingdom is growing. We certainly should check if we are planting faithfully, and be prepared to change and adapt our farming techniques in accordance with the Spirit's leading, but God grows his Kingdom, not us.

3. **The "seed" of the Gospel can be small, and seemingly insignificant**

God can use the smallest effort, the most casual conversation, the smallest act of generosity, the tiniest nugget of biblical truth delivered with grace, to change a life for Christ – with huge results, perhaps results not seen for years, even generations.

4. **The Kingdom will certainly grow, and a harvest is assured**

Like the seed the farmer plants that shoots and develops, like the mustard seed that grows, God's kingdom will grow too. Jesus promises us that he will do this: "...on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." (Matthew 16:18)

5. **The key to conversion is seeing the truth**

The power of a parable is that it opens our minds to the truth by presenting something as similar to other things that we know instinctively are true. Our reasoning is led along a path that allows us to see the truth and the logic. Parables don't exactly change our thinking but rather they clarify it. So, Jesus spoke in parables. But, Jesus' parables challenge us with the truth and if we reject them, we actually have to work against the logic of the analogies. Rejecting the truth is a conscious decision and we are held accountable for that.

As Jesus tells his disciples: (Matthew 13:3-17)

³ This is why I speak to them in parables:

"Though seeing, they do not see;
though hearing, they do not hear or understand.

¹⁴ In them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah:

"You will be ever hearing but never understanding;
you will be ever seeing but never perceiving.

¹⁵ For this people's heart has become calloused;
they hardly hear with their ears,
and they have closed their eyes.

Otherwise they might see with their eyes,
hear with their ears,
understand with their hearts
and turn, and I would heal them.'

¹⁶ But blessed are your eyes because they see, and your ears because they hear. ¹⁷ For truly I tell you, many prophets and righteous people longed to see what you see but did not see it, and to hear what you hear but did not hear it.