

PARISH STUDY RESOURCE

February 2019

TO REACH YOUR COMMUNITY

*You Must Fall in Love
with Your Community*



This resource has been created for use in the Anglican Church Bribie Island for the use of individuals and parish groups. For more resources visit the resource page at www.stpetersbribie.org.au

Anglican
Church
St Peter's Bribie Island

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STUDY – 3 FEBRUARY 2019



Fourth Sunday after Epiphany

Jeremiah 1.4-10

Psalm 71.1-6

1 Corinthians 13.1-13

Luke 4.21-30

Open with a time of prayer, which could include the following ...

Spirit of wisdom and understanding, enlighten our minds to perceive the mysteries of the universe in relation to eternity. Help us to be people of love who fill our lives with the wonder and awe in your presence building a community that reflects the light of Jesus. Amen.

Question

1. Share your first memory of being loved.

Reflection - 1 Corinthians 13.1-13

In this passage Paul speaks in the first-person-singular and explains why love is foremost. In verses 4 to 7 Paul describes what love must do, or not do, rather than what love is. He does not romanticise it with abstract language. Rather, love is a concrete action that comes with all action verbs. Seven out of the fifteen action-verbs have to do with what love must do: “To be patient,” “to be kind,” “to rejoice in the truth,” “to bear all things,” “to believe all things,” “to hope all things,” and “to endure all things.” Then, the rest (eight of them) has to do with what love should not do: “Not to envy,” “not to boast,” “not to be arrogant,” “not to be rude,” “not to seek its own way,” “not to be irritable,” “not to be resentful,” and “not to rejoice in wrongdoing.” If the Corinthians are led by the Spirit and informed by the Lord, they can follow examples of love as shown by Christ and participate in his work, rejoicing in the truth. Furthermore, the Spirit helps them to bear all things, to believe all things, to hope in all things, and to endure all things. At the same time, love means that they should not envy, not boast, not be arrogant or rude, not seek their own way, not be

irritable, not be resentful, and not rejoice in wrongdoing. These works of Love need to be present all the lives of every Christian.

Read the below text aloud as a group (1 Corinthians 13.4-7 - adjusted text)

God is patient; God is kind; God is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. God does not insist on God's own way; God is not irritable or resentful; God does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth. God bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

Questions

2. How does this passage make you feel about God?
3. Now read the passage again, but substitute 'your name' in the place of 'God'. Share something with the group you would like to work on in your life so you can be even more like God.

Reflection - Luke 4.14-30

The Gospel texts for the last two Sundays tells the story of the beginning of Jesus mission and ministry. After Jesus Baptism and time of temptation in the wilderness, we are told that Jesus filled with the power of the Spirit, returned to Galilee, and began to teach in the synagogues. Jesus finds himself in his own hometown where he teaches in the synagogue. While they are amazed by the words he speaks, they take offence for his announcement of prophetic grace in his person, so he is led out of the synagogue, thrown out of town, and all but tossed over the cliff. The good news of the gospel in Luke is tied to the person of Jesus, who is still both crucified and risen. We are not promised any easier fate than is our Lord, who preached prophetic grace in the face of rejection.

Questions

4. When Jesus was given the scroll of Isaiah he read "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed

go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour." What do you think is significant about this passage?

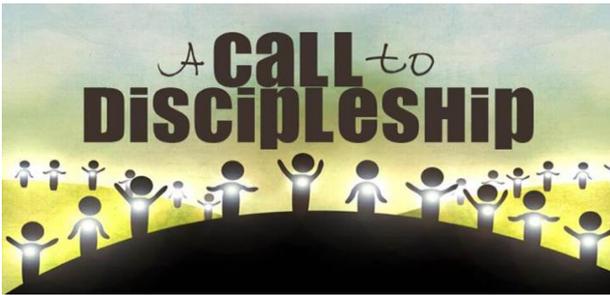
5. What is your role in ensuring that this good news is fulfilled in your lifetime?

Close with a time of prayer – *the privileged of proclaiming the Good News can be filled with rejection and pain, consider praying for a blessing of strength for each member of the group as we all strive to bring the Good News to all we meet.*

Closing Prayer

*Let us go in the peace of Christ,
with the words of God in our minds,
with concern and love of our neighbours in our hearts,
and with the blessing of God upon our lives. Amen.*

STUDY – 10 February 2019



Fifth Sunday after Epiphany

Isaiah 6.1-8

Psalm 138

1 Corinthians 15.1-11

Luke 5.1-11

Open with a time of prayer, which could include the following ...

Spirit of right judgment and courage, guide us and make us firm in our baptismal decision to follow Jesus' way of love. May we respect life as we work to solve problems of family and nation, economy and ecology. Spirit of God, spark our faith, hope and love into new action each day. Fill our lives with wonder and awe in your presence which penetrates all creation. Amen.

Question

1. What do you imagine heaven look like?

Reflection - Isaiah 6.1-8

Although it is chapter 6, this is the beginning of Isaiah's career in which he describes his prophetic call with extravagant imagery. The year is 742 BC. The location is the Jerusalem Temple, in the inner sanctuary – so it is a vision, perhaps a dream. Isaiah 'sees' God, even if it is only the hem of God's garment that fills the Temple. God is surrounded by angels who proclaim God's glory. Isaiah says he is unclean. He is fearful because there is an Old Testament tradition that no one can see God and live. The prophet is cleansed symbolically by an angel and is invited by God to speak as a prophet. He has to announce that God is about to punish the nation until the people finally understand.

Questions

2. Read Isaiah 6:1-8 and discuss the imagery.

3. In verse 8 God says “Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?”, what does it mean for you to say “Here am I; send me!”?

Reflection - Luke 5:1-11

Having left Nazareth and already gathered a crowd around him, Jesus draws the first three of ‘the twelve’. They are by Lake Gennesaret – an alternative name for the Sea of Galilee on the section south of Capernaum – and no doubt Simon was curious to hear what Jesus had to say, because Jesus had borrowed his boat to use as a platform. Afterwards Jesus tells Simon to fish in the deep water and Simon shows his first act of faith/trust by going out, even though he has fished all night and caught nothing. Against all expectations they get a huge catch, enough almost to sink two boats. This ‘nature miracle’ has a parallel in John 21.1-8 – the latter could be the same event transposed to a post-resurrection setting. However, whether historically or narratively, the two stories bookend Jesus’ life, marking both its beginning and its end. Having caught so many fish, Simon and his partners, John and James, are invited to ‘catch’ people. This brings Simon’s second act of faith because he and they abandon everything to stick fast to Jesus.

Questions

4. This passage would indicate that discipleship is about catching people. How do you make catching people for God a priority in your life of Christian discipleship?

Additional Question

5. Read Psalm 138 and share what you are thankful for in your life each day.

Closing Prayer

Lord we thank you that we have received the good news of Jesus that has passed down through generations. Let us go now and take that Good News with us, spreading to others the message of Jesus risen life and love. Amen

STUDY – 17 February 2019



Sixth Sunday after Epiphany

Jeremiah 17.5-10

Psalms 1

1 Corinthians 15.12-20

Luke 6.17-26

Open with a time of prayer, which could include the following ...

Father, we praise and thank you for the lives you have given us to lead here in your wonderful world. We are grateful for home and family, work and play. We are glad to be able to witness to you in word and in deed here and now. Yet our hope isn't for this life only, for you resurrected your Son as the first fruits of all who die. Therefore, we thank you for the hope we have in the hereafter, that we shall be raised to be with you and with one another evermore. Amen.

Question

1. To what tree would you compare your life? Share and explain. (you may like to choose one of the following or your own - Evergreen tree, tall and majestic; Weeping willow, bending with the wind; Desert cactus, a sole survivor)

Reflection - Jeremiah 17.5-10

Jeremiah's career began in 627 BC, in a time of national promise under King Josiah. But with Josiah's death in 609 BC there began a period of great tension, leading up to the Babylonian invasion in 597 BC. Jeremiah put his life in personal danger by denouncing the nation's sin and warning of God's punishment (14.10). The nation had to turn to God, repent and cease sinning. Here, Jeremiah offers a stylistic seed that Jesus developed in his Beatitudes. Jeremiah's curse is on those who reject God and trust only in themselves. He announces God's blessing on 'those who trust in the Lord'. The latter have roots that tap into God in the way that a tree might have roots that reach into a stream.

Questions

2. Do you trust God with all areas of our life, or are there some things you want to control yourself?
3. At present, are you feeling more like a “shrub in the desert” or “tree planted by the water”? Why?

Reflection – Luke 6.17-26

Here, Jesus teaches on a ‘level place’ (v.17) and this ‘Sermon on the Plain’ has a parallel in Matthew’s ‘Sermon on the Mount’. Jesus’ actual words include four blessings and four curses. The ones whom God blesses are the poor/destitute, the hungry/starving, those who weep, the persecuted and defamed. (Makarios/‘blessed’ refers to those whom God favours or blesses, and should not be translated ‘happy’ – those who weep are not happy!) This is clearly eschatological language because it is not evident in the here and now. However, God will turn everything on its head, and Jesus warns the rich, those whose lives are fully satisfied, and those with high social status, that things are going to be different. Jesus introduces the idea of what liberation theologians call ‘God’s preferential option for the poor’.

Questions

4. How do the values Jesus talks about here compare with the values sold to us by modern media and advertising?
5. Do your family live by the values Jesus teaches or the values portrayed to us by modern media and advertising?

Close with a time of prayer - *consider praying for those who feel isolated in our community.*

Closing Prayer

Lord, we pray for those whose hope is for this life only, especially those who are facing their own death, or that of a loved one. Help us all, we pray, to be uplifted by the reality of Christ’s resurrection, which leads to a bright tomorrow beyond all our tomorrows. Amen.

STUDY – 24 FEBRUARY 2019



Seventh Sunday after Epiphany

Genesis 45.3-11,15

Psalms 37.1-11,40-41

1 Corinthians 15.35-50

Luke 6.27-38

Open with a time of prayer, which could include the following ...

Lord Jesus, who took on frail human flesh, we come before you now in the forms you have allotted us for life's journey on Earth. You know what it is like to dwell in this perishable body; you were broken, yet resurrected. Now you reign. So we also, through you, shall shed these earthly forms and rise in heavenly glory. Amen.

Question

1. Do you find it easy to forgive people who have betrayed you?

Reflection - Genesis 45.3-11,15

Joseph (the one with the long coat with sleeves – no mention of any colours) was hated by his 11 brothers because he was their father Jacob's favourite. Joseph's brothers sold him into slavery and told their father that Joseph was dead (chapter 37). However, Joseph was favoured by God and rose high in Egypt. He had divinely inspired dreams and predicted a seven-year period of plenty and a seven-year famine, so that Egypt was well prepared (chapter 41). Here, in chapter 45, the brothers come to Egypt to try to buy grain two years into the famine. They do not recognise this high official, but Joseph reveals his identity and forgives his brothers. He promises to keep them from poverty. The brothers, with a guilty conscience, find it hard to accept his forgiveness – but the world cannot survive without our giving and receiving forgiveness.

Questions

2. If you were in Joseph's position what would you have done when you came face to face with your brothers?
3. Forgiveness is central to the Christian faith, how do you show forgiveness to those who have wronged you?

Reflection – Luke 6.27-38

Jesus offers some really radical teaching: love your enemies! But who are our enemies? There is an old Jewish saying that says "An enemy is someone whose story you do not know." There is a great YouTube clip that we will place on our parish resource page called "The danger of a single story", which emphasises how we cannot start to know someone unless we learn the real stories of their life. Too often we label people our enemy because they talk differently, look different or have a different religion. Jesus tells us to look past our differences and to treat people as you would like to be treated. In verse 31 Jesus says 'Do to others as you would have them do to you'. If your enemy is those who think, look and act differently to you, Jesus expects us to love them, bless them, do not retaliate, even to offer thieves more than they have taken. All this is rooted in God's own character, for you have to be 'merciful just as your Father is merciful'.

Questions

4. How do you feel about the command to love everyone irrelevant of belief, culture or behaviour?
5. How can we better understand people who are different to us?

Close with a time of prayer - *consider praying that our church will be a place where all can feel welcomed and loved.*

Closing Prayer

Lord Jesus, following Your example and command, we pray for our enemies today. We ask first that You would saturate our lives with the Holy Spirit's power and might. Send Your love flowing through us, and forgive us for holding on to anything that could hinder our prayers. We release any unforgiveness, thoughts of revenge, or hateful emotions

that can quench Your Spirit in our hearts. Then give us wisdom as we seek how to bless, to love, and to pray for our enemies. Amen.

YouTube Video Link - <https://youtu.be/D9lhs241zeg>

During February the video referred to above will be linked on our Resources Page on the Parish Website. Alternatively go youtube.com and search “The danger of a single story Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie” or type in the above link. Video is 19 minutes.