



St John's
Being the Gospel to all People

17TH SEPTEMBER 2021

Greetings

**A reflection on
reading: Mark 9:30-37**

Updates

&Zoom link

Tena koutou e hoa,

Ko Ōhūiarangi / Pigeon Mountain te maunga e rū nei taku ngākau

Ko Manawatū te awa e mahea nei aku māharahara

Nō Kenya ahau

Ko Got Akala taku maunga.

Ko Yala taku awa.

E mihi ana ki ngā tohu o nehe, o Te Komiti/ Bucklands Beach e noho nei au.

Nō reira, tēnā koutou katoa

I really enjoyed our time together last Sunday. I cannot believe this is my job, and I am very grateful to you all because you guys keep showing up every week. So, thank you for your presence.

As I mentioned last week, we are at an opportune moment. At this pivotal moment, the things that happen now and how we choose to respond now will enable the things that we hope would come after.

I shared last week that we are in a *Kairos* moment. We tend to think about time as chronology. The quantity of time. That is *Chronus*. *Kairos* is a qualitative time. When we say we are having a goodtime. We are not talking about the amount of time we are having we are talking about the quality of time we are having. When the bible talks about *Kairos*, it is talking about a time of opportunity, a time of possibility, and it a time pregnant where anything can happen. That is why Paul writes in Ephesians:

“Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. Therefore, do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord’s will is.”

Ephesians 5:15-17

This is what we are trying to do. Because we are living at a very challenging time in history – a hinging moment – and it is very confusing and in the midst of all that we are trying to figure out what is the Lord's will is. And the belief we have is that there are not just challenges to be faced but opportunities as well. As an analogy and as we continue to wrestle with where we are, I used an example from church history last week (see last weeks Newsletter).

And so, the question that we are still contending with is **what are we going to build our lives around moving forward.** Let me begin by naming two temptations and then two invitations. As we engage with the question what are we going to build our lives around moving forward, the first temptation is for us to think that we are in charge. We have to do this. The implicit message is that God is not in charge. God is not present with us in this confusing and challenging time. That feeling of thinking we are in charge causes us to think that we are abandoned. So, we think it is up to us to make life happen. There is a difference between being responsible and the thinking that everything depends on us.

And connected to the temptation that we think we are in charge it leads us to over-functioning. That is taking responsibility for things that God has never asked us to carry. For us to over-function implies that we believe God is a chronic under-functioning and therefore He cannot be trusted. And what follows from those two temptations is that we are on our own and so we get busy.

So, what are the antidotes for those two temptations I have just mentioned? Sabbath. Because what are the two virtues at stake when we think we are in charge and when we are over- functioning? Faith and trust. God's invitations to us as we

consider what are we going to build our lives around moving forward, are two things pray and play. That is freaking good news. The Psalmist writes:

“It is good to praise the Lord
and make music to your name, O Most High,” (Psalm 92:1-2 NIV)

“It is good **to give** thanks to Yahweh, **to play** in honor of your name,
Most High,” (Jerusalem Bible).

In times of transition and challenges, as a community, we are invited to pray and play. These are the two things that invite us to be present to God, and to be present to ourselves without fear or the temptation of controlling and manipulating one another.

A Reflection on the reading: Mark 9:30-37

Jesus Predicts His Death a Second Time

30 They left that place and passed through Galilee. Jesus did not want anyone to know where they were, 31 because he was teaching his disciples. He said to them, “The Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men. They will kill him, and after three days he will rise.” 32 But they did not understand what he meant and were afraid to ask him about it.

33 They came to Capernaum. When he was in the house, he asked them, “What were you arguing about on the road?” 34 But they kept quiet because on the way they had argued about who was the greatest.

35 Sitting down, Jesus called the Twelve and said, “Anyone who wants to be first must be the very last, and the servant of all.”

36 He took a little child whom he placed among them. Taking the child in his arms, he said to them, 37 “Whoever welcomes one of these little children in my name welcomes me; and whoever welcomes me does not welcome me but the one who sent me.”

Today’s reading feels to me like when the director of a play or a movie says, “Take 2 and... Action” Because it really has the same contours of the passage, we read last week. Jesus begins by challenging their understanding of who the Messiah is, and what the messiah will be about. But then the disciples make the wrong connection, which results to them jockeying for position. The passage ends with Jesus reframing

their understanding and expectations by the illustration of standing a child in their midst saying,

“Whoever welcomes one of these little children in my name welcomes me; and whoever welcomes me does not welcome me but the one who sent me.”

And so, what does this mean for us, we who are worshiping at St Johns Bucklands beach now.

Update

I usually meet with the youth leaders once a week for community building and for planning youth group activities. This week we decided that we want to host the **February 25th to the 27th St Johns Camp at Hanua Falls**. For a number of years this is one of the things that the Mandarin Speaking community has been good at. The whole community had the practice of taking a weekend to pray and play together. And as youth leaders we asked ourselves should we be doing that still? And the answer was yes. We just need to figure out how (i.e. figure out practical things to try and mitigating the outside toilet challenge for our most seasoned members) and how to keep it affordable for everyone so that everybody can participate.

Last summer my family and I had the opportunity to join the Mandarin Speaking Community in their camp, and I have to say, had so much time to devote to friendship sitting around the fire late at night. I also had the opportunities to play with my kids and the young people in our community. I believe play and pray is fundamental to our humanity, not extra curriculum. Is anyone interested in any of those things – because I am. Because those two things connect me to my humanity in ways that cannot be controlled. When I pray and play, I am free in God and I am free in my flesh and I am free with all of you demonstrating another reality. So, would you please strongly consider joining us in this summer camp. We will begin the initial planning for it, and as we continue with the planning, we will begin to co-opt more people in the planning – so stay tuned.

This November 30, 2021 will be our 46th birthday as a church. St Johns Bucklands began 30th November 1975, which is amazing. Praise God for all of you guys and for

God's faithfulness to us. And you know as I read about our 46 years of history you know what I have realized, St Johns was birthed in strength, not weakness, and over the years there has been a lot of learning and opportunities that have shaped our collective imagination of who we are and what we are about.

Last November 2020 I began working as the new minister of St Johns by the grace of God, the best gift I have ever received in my life. And it has been a new season for me, and my family and I suspect for you as well. I have inherited all the good things you guys have learnt over the 46 years. And now we are presented with some new challenges and it feels like we are being called to start again. We are never going back to what we had before. This is St Johns. You are it. You are the people who are showing up. This is our church. Right? And so, we are building. And so, the question is, "What is going back in the garage", in our life together. And so, I want to invite us to pray and play.

Here is a link for Sunday Morning Service:

Jeff is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: Sunday Morning Gathering

Time: Sep 12, 2021 09:30 AM Auckland, Wellington

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/9895548740?pwd=VFduaXNJWCtJYnErZfVJME1NUm9JQT09>

Meeting ID: 989 554 8740

Passcode: 7777777