



St John's
Being the Gospel to all People

1ST OCTOBER 2021

Greetings

**A reflection on
reading: Mark 10:1-16**

Updates

&Zoom link

Greetings my friends.

Paul writes, “12 Now we see a reflection in a mirror; then we will see face-to-face. Now I know partially, but then I will know completely in the same way that I have been completely known. 13 Now faith, hope, and love remain—these three things—and the greatest of these is love.”

I have been thinking about love, and how critical love is to community. Both with God, with ourselves and to one another. And how sin tends to undermine that.

Thomas Merton writes:

“All sin is rooted in the failure of love. All sin is withdrawal of love from God, in order to love something else. Sin sets boundary to our hope and locks our love in prison.”

-No Man is an Island.

We are called to resist turning our hearts to anything but God. I love this quote.

For the last few weeks, I have been inviting us more deeply into our lives together. Asking us to investigate **what are we going to build our lives around moving forward.**

This invitation comes from a declaration we say out loud every time we have communion “We are a community of people following Jesus and learning to live in the rhythms of His grace.” This declaration is a poetic telling of Matthew 11:28-30.

28-30 “Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you’ll recover your life. I’ll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me—watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won’t lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with me and you’ll learn to live freely and lightly.”

Matthew is essentially saying do you want to have to live a life marked by unforced rhythms of grace. The answer is come away with Jesus. Come walk and work with him and watch how he does it. How does Jesus walk and work with God? Jesus shows up to God in prayer. Jesus shares God's goodness with others. Jesus is willing to risk his life. Jesus' risked life transforms and finally, through his Spirit Jesus sends the disciples into the world.

Another way of saying all that is that Jesus is present. Jesus is generous. Jesus is creative. Jesus is transforming and Jesus is active in the world. So, when we put ourselves in a place to interact with Jesus in the ways that Matthew describes we become a community of people who are following Jesus and learning to live in the rhythms of His grace. That is, we become a community that mirrors those very same activities. We show up – we become a community of presence. We share – we become a community of generosity. We risk. Why? Because that is the only way creativity happens in our lives. And when we do that we are changed – we become a community of transformation. Leading us to act. Which is to say we become a community of hope in our neighbourhood and our world.

So, unless we are willing to become a people that shows up, that shares and are willing to risk we will never be transformed. To be reformed and formed again and again into the community of love requires us to engage with God, and one another.

So, if we stop showing up, and if we stop sharing, and if we stop risking. We might get comfortable, but we will not be transformed. So, invitation remains **what are we going to build our lives around moving forward.**

A Reflection on the reading: Mark 10:1-16

Teaching about Divorce

10 He left that place and went to the region of Judea and beyond the Jordan. And crowds again gathered around him; and, as was his custom, he again taught them.

2 Some Pharisees came, and to test him they asked, “Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?” 3 He answered them, “What did Moses command you?” 4 They said, “Moses allowed a man to write a certificate of dismissal and to divorce her.” 5 But Jesus said to them, “Because of your hardness of heart he wrote this commandment for you. 6 But from the beginning of creation, ‘God made them male and female.’ 7 ‘For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, 8 and the two shall become one flesh.’ So, they are no longer two, but one flesh. 9 Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate.”

10 Then in the house the disciples asked him again about this matter. 11 He said to them, “Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her; 12 and if she divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery.”

Jesus Blesses Little Children

13 People were bringing little children to him in order that he might touch them; and the disciples spoke sternly to them. 14 But when Jesus saw this, he was indignant and said to them, “Let the little children come to me; do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs. 15 Truly I tell you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will never

enter it.” 16 And he took them up in his arms, laid his hands on them, and blessed them.

There are two questions that frame today's passage:

“... Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?

To which Jesus asks?

What did Moses command you?

And the Pharisees answered

“Moses gave a concession to fill out a certificate of dismissal and divorce her.”

To which Jesus says’

“Moses only wrote this command as a concession to your hardness of heart.”

The human heart is a magnificent, beautiful inner landscape that continues to expand. However, it usually gets shattered and blown up in little bits when it gets bruised or hurt. It is wonder we struggle to hear the voice of God or sense His love and affection. And so, the issues for me as a pastor is how do we heal a broken heart? How do we keep our hearts open and not become calcified as the Pharisees hearts were?

The lectionary this week pairs a familiar portion of the creation story in Genesis with Jesus's teaching on divorce in the Gospel of Mark. While these texts are straightforward about marriage, I think they offer us a broader vision as well. They speak to all human relationships, to the ways in which we see, treat, protect, harm, empower, and disempower each other. If we read them with an open mind, they offer us a meaningful and timely commentary on our common life.

Update

1. The Mandarin speaking community meet with Pastor Pan this week and together this is what they agreed to.
 - Pastor Pan has agreed to preach once a month.
 - Pastor Marco Wu has agreed to preach two Sunday's a month. He will start this week on Zoom.
 - The first Sunday of the month, the Mandarin speaking community will meet upstairs and watch a video and then join us downstairs for communion and morning tea.
 - We will have shared lunch every first Sunday of the month.
 - The Mandarin speaking community would like to join the Tuesday morning Coffee and Chat.
 - Once a month on Tuesday night the Mandarin speaking community would like to have shared dinner.
 - Lastly, the Mandarin speaking community would like us to come together once a month to celebrate the birthdays of people in our St Johns community with a cake

In sum, the Mandarin speaking community want to continue being part of St Johns and they want to also create opportunities that will enable the building up of relationships between families.

2. The youth leaders are designing hoodies for St Johns. It began as a Holiday Programme project. But then it turned into a community building initiative. If you would like to make an order please find the order form on our website <https://stjohnsbb.org.nz/> there will be a link there.
3. I am excited to share that Alice Wood has agreed to be our February Camp speaker. Alice is a Spiritual Director and a chaplain at Massey University in

Wellington. Alice has extensive experience in creating creative prayer spaces, working with young adults and she has been a pastor of 2nd generation Mandarin speaking community as well as working as a missionary in mainland China. Alice is originally from Taiwan but has been living and working in New Zealand for long while. I am so excited about this and hope that we will plan to make time to be part of the camp as we come together to build relationships and “Pray and Play” together. The camp will be from Friday evening on 25th February until Sunday afternoon 27th February at Hunua Fall Presbyterian campsite. So far, the camp will cost \$100 pp and \$50 dollars for day pass. The camp is still on planning phase so anyone who would like to join in the planning team or would like to know more about it please don't hesitate to reach out to Sami Smart.

4. Tonight, St Mary's Glen Innes is joining us on our game night. You all most welcomed to join us. We start 7pm. Here is the Zoom link:

Jeff is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: Youth Group Game Night

Time: Oct 1, 2021 07:00 PM Independent State of Samoa

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/9895548740?pwd=VFduaXNJWCtJYnErZFVJME1NUm9JQT09>

Meeting ID: 989 554 8740

Passcode: 7777777

5. Here is the Sunday morning zoom invite:

Jeff is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Join Zoom Meeting

[https://us02web.zoom.us/j/9895548740?pwd=VFduaXNJWCtJYnErZ](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/9895548740?pwd=VFduaXNJWCtJYnErZFVJME1NUm9JQT09)

FVJME1NUm9JQT09

Meeting ID: 989 554 8740

Passcode: 7777777

6. Lastly, the Presbyterian Church installed the new moderator

Right Rev. Hamish Galloway. I really love his sermon. You can listen to his sermon in entirety here: [https://vimeo.com/618268989?fbclid=IwAR2dCom-](https://vimeo.com/618268989?fbclid=IwAR2dCom-7R0jT-3qN52Bnao5c4NyMRXLtvcYK0Ub3gMxgXq4pOO-SPeY_aQ)

[7R0jT-3qN52Bnao5c4NyMRXLtvcYK0Ub3gMxgXq4pOO-SPeY_aQ](https://vimeo.com/618268989?fbclid=IwAR2dCom-7R0jT-3qN52Bnao5c4NyMRXLtvcYK0Ub3gMxgXq4pOO-SPeY_aQ)