



**St John's**  
*Being the Gospel to all People*

---

---

**15TH OCTOBER 2021**

**Greetings**

**A reflection on  
reading: Mark 10:32-45**

**Updates**

**&Zoom link**

---

## Greetings my friends.

I hope you are having a wonderful week. Below is Bishop Ross sermon.

**A sermon preached by Bishop Ross Bay and available for broadcast in online worship on Sunday 17 October 2021. The gospel passage is Mark 10:35-45.**

E ngā mana, e ngā reo, e ngā hau e whā, tēnā koutou katoa. Greetings to you all in ministry units around the Diocese as most of us continue to gather in virtual ways for corporate worship. I am glad to join you to offer this sermon today, conscious of the long haul that this lockdown is creating for us. Thank you for persevering and for continuing to support one another in all sorts of ways, including by being together in worship. We are reading from Hebrews on Sunday mornings at present and I am mindful of a verse in chapter 10 which in the face of hardship reminds believers not to neglect gathering together and encouragement of one another.

I extend special thanks to clergy and leaders in your worshipping communities who are working hard to make that possible, so please encourage them and support their efforts for you. In all things, we seek to continue to glorify God in our lives.

Vaccination is the issue on everyone's lips. As I write this sermon, the country is preparing for a Super Saturday of vaccinations and even holding a "Vax-a-thon" to go alongside it which is a throw back to my childhood. Recording ahead means that, unlike normal preaching, I won't be able to see how that has gone and add in any quick comments.

There is no question that the vaccination programme is now the major strategy for moving our nation to a point where we can adjust to living with Covid-19 as part of

---

our ongoing reality. At the moment, for Aucklanders especially, there is a big incentive to cooperate with that because it gives us some hope of light ahead that our lives can regain some normality, and that more people can go back to work on full pay, and that the businesses that employ them will still be there.

It's not as simple as it sounds, because across the country we have vaccine-averse and vaccinehesitant people, along with those who for a variety of reasons are struggling to access a vaccination or are experiencing exclusion from the programme.

The best advice we are being given to help reach this final group is to work personally with them. It's a little bit like the best approach to sharing our faith. It is not to stand on a platform and preach to strangers, nor to constantly convey messages designed to scare people, but to sit down quietly with another and explain why this is important to me and answer the questions the other may have in a spirit of trust and care.

Times like these do bring out the best and worst in people. The journey Jesus made to Jerusalem in the final weeks of his life did that. There is a whole series of moments where disciples don't quite get what Jesus is trying to tell them, but they realise it is a critical time, and the stress of it means they don't always do the right thing. We read today of the request of James and John, the other disciples' response to it, and Jesus' advice to them about a different way to approach it all.

James and John wanted places of honour and importance, and the other disciples became jealous and angry as a result. This in spite of the fact that Jesus has been

---

telling them things like the first being last, those who act with the trust of small children being greatest, and his own willingness to die for the good of others.

Jostling for position, jealousy, anger, misunderstanding. They are all things we have to strive to overcome as we build community life. It can be very hard to perceive when those things are present, when the stakes are high and people are convinced by their own position and driven by the outcomes they believe are so critical. Sometimes the line is easy to cross and so become the rulers who lord it over others or the great ones who are tyrants over them.

Oh, and before people begin to speculate, I am not making a comment here on the government or any person leading in covid response. I would not want their job for all the communion wafers in Christendom. It's not about judging others, but about looking at ourselves and where our responsibility rests in being part of a community response to this or to any challenge we face together.

So yes, I have been vaccinated, and I did so for a number of reasons. Some of them are self-interest, like for the sake of my own health and well-being if I did catch the virus and so that when the time comes, I am not excluded from activities in the community. But I also did it because I believe that a wider community good is served by being part of the percentage we need to reach. For me that is about a community ethic of which I believe Jesus speaks when he tells of the great being servants, and the first being a slave to all, and when he speaks of his own destiny being about life-giving service. Jesus gives his life for the salvation of us all, and so sets a path for the kind of spirituality that should mark out the life of the Christian Church and each person in it.

---

So whether it be vaccinations, or the number of refugees we welcome, or ensuring the homeless have a safe and warm place to sleep, or protecting our planet for the sake of the generations who come after us, as followers of Jesus Christ, the one who came not to be served but to serve, we are people who have a commitment to seek the good of others, the common good of the community as a whole.

This approach by James and John shows us that a desire to seek whatever we want and what we think is good for us, is the wrong starting place. The references Jesus makes to cup and baptism were probably about the suffering that lay ahead of him. For us they can also be about the sacraments by which we are united with Christ and sustained in our life in Christ. We do well to ponder what it means to stand with Christ in the midst of the suffering and the need of others, and act for their good before our own.

I imagine those disciples were afraid of a future that Jesus spoke of and which they could not understand. Fear of the unknown can drive us to self-interest and to jealousy and anger. Let us not be afraid. Let us seek to allay the fears of those who are. We carry the peace and hope of Christ within us, gifts of God to us, and through us to others. Let us be as Christ, alongside others, building a healthy community, finding our way together

---

## A Reflection on the reading: Mark 10:32-45

<sup>32</sup> At length, they made their way toward Jerusalem. Jesus was walking ahead of them. As they neared the city, wonder and amazement filled them. But soon those who were following began to tremble.

**Jesus** (*taking the twelve aside*): <sup>33</sup> Look, we are going up to Jerusalem, and there the Son of Man is going to be delivered to the chief priests and the scribes. They shall seek His death and deliver Him to the outsiders *to carry out that sentence*. <sup>34</sup> Then people will mock Him, spit upon Him, whip Him, and kill Him. But on the third day, He will rise again.

<sup>35</sup> Two of the twelve—the sons of Zebedee *as they were known*—approached Jesus and pulled Him aside.

**James and John:** Teacher, will You do something for us if we ask it of You?

**Jesus:** <sup>36</sup> What is it that you want?

**James and John:** <sup>37</sup> *Master*, grant that we might sit on either side of You, one at Your right hand and one at Your left, when You come into the glory of Your kingdom.

**Jesus:** <sup>38</sup> You don't know what it is you're asking. Can you drink from the cup I have to drink from or be ritually washed in baptism with the baptism that awaits Me?

**James and John:** <sup>39</sup> We can.

---

**Jesus:** You will indeed drink from the cup I drink from and be baptized with the baptism that awaits Me. <sup>40</sup> But to sit at My right or at My left is an honour I cannot grant. That will be given to those for whom it has been prepared.

<sup>41</sup> When the other ten heard about this request, they were angry with James and John; <sup>42</sup> but Jesus stopped them.

**Jesus:** You know that among the nations of the world the great ones lord it over the little people and act like tyrants. <sup>43</sup> But that is not the way it will be among you. Whoever would be great among you must serve and minister. <sup>44</sup> Whoever wants to be great among you must be slave of all. <sup>45</sup> Even the Son of Man came not to be served but to be a servant—to offer His life as a ransom for others.

None of the disciples understand what Jesus is telling them, and none of His predictions will become clear to them until after His resurrection. In the meantime, several of His disciples are not only failing to understand His warnings about the things to come but are missing His message on things right before their eyes. Jesus has already told them that to be great among His followers means to become humble like a child; but James and John still think that as two of His closest disciples, they can win worldly fame and power.

---

## Update

You will recall that 2 weeks ago Mavis initiated a conversation on how we might respond to communities in need in this pandemic. Jeff, Mavis and Liz have discussed this further and would like to present a possible way for St Johns to reach out to a hurting community.

David Hall has also brought our attention the need to consider the underlying structural reasons why there are poor and marginalised people in our communities. David has agreed to lead a zoom “Food for Thought” discussion on this in the near future.

In the meantime being very aware of the urgent needs around us we would like to suggest we offer some financial support to “The Breakfast Club”

<https://breakfastclub.org.nz/>

The Breakfast Club’s purpose is to find a way to assist principals and teachers to get kids what they need so they can concentrate on learning – and create a better future for themselves. Founded by Steve Farrelly, an ex-police officer with a soft spot for cheeky, hungry kids in 2010, Breakfast Club now has an amazing team of volunteers and supporters

Liz has heard Steve speak of the club’s work previously and was very impressed and Sami Smart and family have been volunteered and supported Breakfast club for some time now. I have also spoken to him and I am really taken by the work he has been involved in and is currently doing. This organisation which works in the Flat Bush area and also Glen Innes is currently doing food parcels for families in need.

We would like to suggest that we offer our members an opportunity to support the organisation’s work by donating money. This should be done through St Johns so we can then see it as our visible work for God outside ourselves. In no way does this cut across our All Saints donations

As the city returns to a more “normal” state then there could be an opportunity for us to further develop the relationship through some “hands on” volunteering.

In addition to our regular church giving, here are two ways that Steve has proposed for us to engage with them at this time. We can either provide food donations, which he is happy to come pick up. And/or donate money, which can either be given directly to the Breakfast Club (and you can find their account details on our website)

---

or through St Johns and we then pass it on to the Breakfast Club. If you are interested to help out, please get in touch with Alison [office@stjohnsbb.org.nz](mailto:office@stjohnsbb.org.nz)

Meanwhile, take a look at our website and you find suggestions of other organizations that are currently working near us

<https://stjohnsbb.org.nz/supportlocal-during-level-4/>

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/st-johns-hoodies/>

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 2<sup>nd</sup> 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. I am also excited that Ben Lee is willing to help out with worship. Ben lives locally, and he a very experienced worship leader. I am excited about the possibility of Ben working with our young people in way of mentoring them in the dynamics of worship leading. Please find the registration form

<https://stjohnsbb.org.nz/community-camp/>

---

## Friday Night Youth Group

Jeff is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Join Zoom Meeting

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

Meeting ID: 989 554 8740

Passcode: 7777777

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=VFduaXNJWCtJYnErZfVJME1NUm9JQT09>

Meeting ID: 989 554 8740

Passcode: 7777777