



St Johns
Being the Gospel to all People

8TH OCTOBER 2021

Greetings

**A reflection on
reading: Mark 10:17-31**

Updates

&Zoom link

Greetings my friends.

The writer of Hebrews writes:

“Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, ² fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. ³ Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.”

- Hebrews 12:1-3

What the writer of Hebrews seems to suggest is that there comes a time when we will grow weary and lose heart, and the antidote for weariness and discouragement is to fix our eyes on Jesus. Why is fixing our eyes on Jesus significant?

I suggest two reasons. Firstly, when we fix our eyes on the cross, we see Jesus embracing suffering. Not denying or by-passing suffering but entering fully the reality of suffering, which in turn gives us the courage and the strength to carry our own cross and following him.

Secondly, the reason we are encouraged to fix our eyes of Jesus is that we see Jesus absorbing the suffering and transforming towards resurrection. We then realize that suffering is not the end of the story, but a fraction of the whole story. That reality is actually bent towards resurrection life.

Could this invitation in Hebrew be **what we are going to build our life around moving forward.**

A Reflection on the reading: Mark 10:17-31

To Enter God's Kingdom

17 As he went out into the street, a man came running up, greeted him with great reverence, and asked, "Good Teacher, what must I do to get eternal life?"

18-19 Jesus said, "Why are you calling me good? No one is good, only God. You know the commandments: Don't murder, don't commit adultery, don't steal, don't lie, don't cheat, honor your father and mother."

20 He said, "Teacher, I have—from my youth—kept them all!"

21 Jesus looked him hard in the eye—and loved him! He said, "There's one thing left: Go sell whatever you own and give it to the poor. All your wealth will then be heavenly wealth. And come follow me."

22 The man's face clouded over. This was the last thing he expected to hear, and he walked off with a heavy heart. He was holding on tight to a lot of things, and not about to let go.

23-25 Looking at his disciples, Jesus said, "Do you have any idea how difficult it is for people who 'have it all' to enter God's kingdom?" The disciples couldn't believe what they were hearing, but Jesus kept on: "You can't imagine how difficult. I'd say it's easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye than for the rich to get into God's kingdom."

26 That got their attention. "Then who has any chance at all?" they asked.

27 Jesus was blunt: "No chance at all if you think you can pull it off by yourself. Every chance in the world if you let God do it."

28 Peter tried another angle: "We left everything and followed you."

29-31 Jesus said, “Mark my words, no one who sacrifices house, brothers, sisters, mother, father, children, land—whatever—because of me and the Message will lose out. They’ll get it all back, but multiplied many times in homes, brothers, sisters, mothers, children, and land—but also in troubles. And then the bonus of eternal life! This is once again the Great Reversal: Many who are first will end up last, and the last first.”

The gospel reading today relates to a story of a young rich ruler who asked Jesus, “Good Teacher... What must I do to inherit eternal life? In other words what must I do to participate in the Age to come?”

So, how does Jesus react? Jesus seems to reply by first of all criticizing. It’s not even the man’s questions that he criticizes but the greetings before it. “Why do you call me good? No one is good – except God alone”. His reply to the young rich ruler seems just irrelevant and picky.

From this encounter we learn the following: Jesus is not primarily about intellectually gasping for answers (although, in the long run that’s desirable), and Jesus is not primarily a teacher. Nor is following Jesus primarily about obedience (although something like that will be required). Also, Jesus is not primarily a new law giver. Primarily, it appears this encounter reveals to us that following Jesus is about our attitude towards Jesus, from which obedience and understanding may then begin to flow naturally. The call “come on! Follow me!” echoes down through history, and we are judged by the answer we give. So, what is your response St Johns?

You see Jesus' new movement was indeed a radical revision of what it meant to be God's people and following the law of Moses. Because Jesus had come from eternity into our history, a whole new world had opened up. That is the Age to come was now not simply a future reality (although it is that too) the Age to come was now bursting into the present, like a chicken so keen to be born and is already sticking its beak through the shell ahead of its time.

Update

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 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. Please find the registration form <https://stjohnsbb.org.nz/community-camp/>

Last Sunday after the service a very exciting conversation was introduced by Mavis Haigh on what ways we might respond to our communities in special need at this time of the Pandemic. There are have been subsequent conversations and we are advancing the conversations. Meanwhile, take a look at our website and take a look at some suggestions of the organisations that are currently working near us

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

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

Lastly, Take a listen to this year's **Keynote speaker at the Presbyterian General Assembly. Her name is Rev. Dr. Theresa Cho.** Here is her talk in entirety

https://vimeo.com/616773477?fbclid=IwAR1M7atAv1XTaXSb0_RLesw7x4oGwDBezPoPDKFUwGSQFqI78noD_2EjTPU