

HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS WITH JESUS.

TEXT: MATTHEW 9: 35 – 10: 8.

THEME: LIVING IN A HEALTHY RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS & THE LAST 4 COMMANDMENTS.

Grace, peace, and mercy, from God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Sometimes in life, you just don't have a choice at all! **You are on show whether you like it or not!** The moment you give yourself an identity or identify with some group or cause or whatever; you've just put yourself in the front line of the public firing line.

You may have read about this headlines in the news or seen it on TV, that Belinda Neal MP, wife/partner of John Della Bosca MP, was reprimanded by Julia Gillard

[in the absence of PM Kevin Rudd] for her behaviour in public. Miss Gillard reminded Belinda that there are protocols she has to uphold as a Member of Parliament in her public life. She was later to become part of the headlines of, **The "Night of the Iguanas"**, which was some kind of take/drama on the movie, "The Night of the Generals", a World War Two Hitler movie. I liked that and found that amusing.

Seriously though, you and I are in the telescopic sights of the public firing line; simply because we are confessing Christians. And I guess that we get our fair share of ribbing from people, deliberate or otherwise or whatever the case may be.

Another contemporary that has us in his sights is that prowling lion Satan, he is watching our each and every move, very carefully. He will also ensure that anyone who stands up for Christ will be pursued with a lusty

vengeance, just because he hates God and what he means to his creation.

Satan can't stand any advancement on Christ's kingdom because it lessens his. And anyone who dares ridicule Christ is making his kingdom larger, because he wants to take as many people down with him as he can into the pits of hell which was made specifically for him and his demons.

But speaking of public figures and being in the firing line, our Prime Minister Kevin Rudd is the man very much in vogue at the moment; and he is constantly in the limelight. He is on a world trip at the moment doing a diplomatic tour; I don't know, perhaps this goes with the territory, but while he is away there is a grumbling going on in this country because of the petrol prices.

They are soaring out of control and are very taxing on the ordinary budgets of this nation. This is economically

very bad news in very bad economical times at the moment [housing is gone out of control, food prices, etc.]. And let me share this with you: among the people I bump into and the crowd scene I mix with; I don't know a lot of people who are receiving the "average" pay packet each week?

But let's have a sobering view and take stock of the **situation; PM Kevin Rudd is the leader of our nation; the people of Australia chose him and put him there, so he deserves high praise for that calling indeed. Jesus said, "Give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar and give to God what belongs to God".**

While it's easy for people to grumble, growl and ridicule him, let's remember that he is a man who is in authority, and the Bible tells us to honour, respect and love those who lord it over you and are in control of your lives and situations. In other words, we are to pray for their well-

being and wisdom in looking after and having our best interests at heart.

So when we put Kevin Rudd under the microscope, let's remember he is also someone that God has put in control to manage the nation the best way he sees fit [which could be debatable]. Let's not just place blame and hammer him for the bad things that are occurring at the moment but pray that we have enough food on the table and clothes on our backs to survive until we are really in dire need. Who among us has got more than one pair of shoes or a change of clothes? Compare that to the Third World countries and see how blessed we really are!

Yes I agree we are all feeling the effects of the national Budget in our lives. And we may be acting and feeling like the crowd of people that Jesus saw as he was travelling around the towns and villages [v 35] in his country. In fact Jesus had compassion on them; he saw that they were 'harassed and helpless like sheep without

a shepherd [V 36].’ And if we feel that our lives are going nowhere fast [because you need to be well off to go anywhere or do anything these days], we could end up feeling harassed and helpless like they did, especially when we think of the “pian at the pump”. We can't go anywhere!

Most of us would be feeling that we only live to exist for the present, which may be a good thing after all, because Jesus tells us in the parable's that “Today has enough problems to take care of itself”. Then that's all we can do without putting ourselves into debt or get into serious trouble [which a lot of people have done] planning for our futures and that of our children.

Today we are also looking at the last four of the Ten Commandments; which are [this is an older version]: [7] Do not steal; [8] Do not tell lies about anyone; [9] Do not want anyone else's .house; [10] Do not want anyone else's husband or wife, servants, animals or possessions.

So as people who live from these commandments; are we maintaining these commandments in our lives? The Seventh commandment 'stealing' is not the obvious deliberate act that we are aware of taking something, but that it can be the underhanded things that occur today.

Soon it will be tax time and we must ensure that all the details are correct otherwise we may be short-changing the coffers of the government by a few denarius. It can also be that we are not giving our families the appropriate amount of time and love that we should be investing in them. We don't want any love taken away from us, do we? God's love for us is not limited to time, it's eternal, God doesn't short change us. let's do the right thing by our families.

The Eighth Commandment I guess I clarified a bit when I spoke about people being in the public eye [including Christians] and how easy it is for all of us to make some

ugly, nasty comments about people who may be doing their best, the best way they can, to make their lives comfortable and complete.

The Ninth and Tenth Commandments are similar and close in that they follow on with wanting and desiring what other people have. God is telling us to be happy and contented with what we've got, because in the end, the grass may not be greener on the other side [neighbour], when we've got what doesn't belong to us.

What we wrongfully obtained may be of no use to us because he or she may not be what we had desired in the first place; it could turn out to be a whole lot of trouble we helped burden ourselves with.

As confessing Christians we are also Christ's disciples sent out into the world just like the original twelve disciples were sent out with this ordinance in 10:7 As you go, preach this message: 'The kingdom of heaven is

near.' Jesus pointed his finger from the disciples to the lost people in this world, instructing the disciples that if the only one thing people get from them are Jesus' message of hope, then that will be sufficient.

It doesn't matter if they did not receive any healing of the souls or deliverance from demons, but that they hear the words that the kingdom of heaven is near. I'm sure we too can give utterance from our mouths that the kingdom of heaven is near.

Why should we as Christians do so? Because as Jesus rightfully says, "The harvest is plentiful but the labourers are few". How right is that comment for this world today? Jesus hit the nail right on the head then as it is very appropriate for this day and age.

If we took a quick glimpse around us; we would see that Church memberships everywhere are shrinking [not just in the Lutheran Church]; there many more spaces

between the pews; older faithful members are dying and the younger ones aren't filling up the void of those who are gone. Where are the younger people of the faithful believers? Have they gone Jesus shopping? What are they waiting for? The Spirit and the Bride say, 'Come'. But let's not get too frustrated, because God is still in control, He is still on the throne!

All I know from this gospel lesson is that the harvest fields of the lost, are ripe for picking, and that there are not too many workers who are out there gathering them in. And if we are concerned and are burdened by this, then we who have the fingers pointing at us can do our bit by acting, saying and telling others about what the good Lord has done for us. All we have to do is water the plants of those who are looking in God's direction. God will do the rest because he does the choosing of people who will come into his kingdom in the first place.

Just in closing let me encourage you in building your healthy relationships with each other and with Christ. Enjoying relationships with each other, either through church or through your groups and fellowships outside of church.

This year for some reason or another [for me] has been one of growth and maturity for me. It's also flying by at a million miles an hour and I feel an expectation is about to occur or is occurring, through the series about "Relationships" that Pastor Tim has begun at the beginning of this year.

I'd like to quote Dr Phil when he says, "If you choose the behaviour, then you be prepared to wear the consequences". We by choice, [as Christians] choose to worship God, and at one time or another, our lives will take us into all sorts of circumstances and situations that sometimes may put us in a bad light for people to ridicule us. This can give people an opportunity to gossip, talk,

bad-mouth us and lie about us. But God knows our hearts and minds because he is our deliverer and in him we receive our life, forgiveness of sins and strength to face each day and the courage to stand up for him. He is all we need. Amen.

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.