

blessed us with. I'm not talking, hoping someone out there is listening and might be nice to me. When we pray, in Jesus, we know Jesus is listening and telling the Father all about us. That's something I was reminded of as I read through the book of Hebrews this week. Jesus is our High Priest, the one who represents his brothers and sisters before God the Father. There's just no way the Father can forget about us, Jesus is there constantly reminding

him. Constantly talking with Father about you, about us, about the community he loves, the community made up of his loved children.

What Good News, in Jesus we can listen to God and walk safely through this wilderness, enjoying him company now, looking forward to that great life we'll share together in his Promised Land. Let's make it a priority to read the bible and listen to Jesus. This coming year let's all take on the

challenge of reading, listening through the whole bible.

Let us pray.
Jesus, please daily keep our hearts attuned to you that we might be listening intently. Hearing and doing what you say. Remove everything that stops us hearing you clearly, and flood our lives with the Holy Spirit that we might always be hearing you clearly.

Christ Church Lutheran

Worship Times - 9.00am & 10.45am
Pastor: Tim 0427326553



Reaching Out with the Love of Jesus that All my Know, Worship & Grow in Christ

18 December 2011

HOW DO WE PRIORITISE? - 5

John 1:6-8, 19-28



Today as we reflect on how we prioritise I'm reminded to listen. To listen to Jesus. Which is part of the Good News of Christmas, we have Jesus, so we can listen to him. It would have been hard to listen to Jesus if he'd never been born. But thankfully he has, so that we can live listening to him, and sharing with him what is on our hearts and minds.

That's Good News; I'm not trying to communicate with an alien, with someone who I can't understand, who doesn't speak my language. Jesus is a human being, he understands my feelings, my emotions, my thoughts, so I can listen to him. As I read this week from the book of Hebrews; 'We're of the same family'.

John the Baptist was sent to get people ready to listen to Jesus. Interestingly John is found out in the wilderness. Which is symbolic of where we live right now. We're not in the Promised Land, we're on our way there. So we're in the wilderness. What images come to your mind when you think of the wilderness?

One thought I have is that it is important to listen to the guide, because the wilderness is a dangerous place. If I was out in the Australian bush without a guide, I'd die rather quickly. The wilderness speaks to me of danger and the need to listen carefully to the one who is leading. And thankfully the one leading us is Jesus. So we're in great hands.

And he's not speaking some foreign language we can't understand, he's our brother.

The wilderness also reminds me of the Children of Israel who once set free from Egypt were called to go through the wilderness with the LORD, being lead by Moses.

The LORD didn't lead the Children of Israel off into the wilderness to be mean, but that he might bless them. This is where he took a group of people and moulded them into a community. A special community, because now they were to be made in the LORD'S image. This was to be a very special time, a time of intimacy, a time of growing together, learning to trust their LORD.

Unfortunately the Children of Israel didn't listen and a whole generation die in the wilderness. It's a sad story, and a story I don't want to emulate. They could have entered the Promised Land two years after leaving Egypt, full of confidence; they'd seen the ten plagues, walked through the Red Sea on dry ground and witnessed the defeat of Pharaoh's army. A million plus people had been fed and given water in the wilderness. They had had a wonderful encounter with God receiving from his own hand his will for them as a community at Mount Sinai. After two years they could have entered the Promised Land and started living as the light the LORD had intended them to be. But instead of two it took forty years, and the death of a generation. I don't want to emulate the Children of Israel.

I want to learn from them, which is why God had it recorded. I want to emulate Jesus, who listened to his Father, followed his will, trusting him completely. This is Good News, for in Jesus we are empowered to emulate him. This isn't wishing but the Father's very plan. That together we might be the 'Body of Christ', made in his image, being Jesus' light to the nations. A beacon of hope. Showing Jesus as the answer to our world's problems. We all know that the world has problems. I hear that every day. I hear of economic problems. I hear of social problems. I hear of environmental problems. Which is all

part of our wilderness trek. I could try and solve these problems and live out in the wilderness. Or I could find a guide who could lead me through this wilderness. Jesus is the one who helps us live in this wilderness and the one who also is leading us through this wilderness to his Promised Land. One reason people don't hear Jesus clearly when they're in the wilderness is they're busy trying to survive using their own resources. Isn't it Good News that we don't have to seek to survive, but with Jesus we have started to live, started to prepare for life in his Promised Land. Jesus doesn't want us to just survive but to live life in all his fullness. Jesus has come that we might have life to the full, in his fullness.

In Jesus we can Listen to God.

So today I'm reminded to listen to Jesus, because I can trust him; he's my brother. He's come into the wilderness to lead me to his Promised Land, so I'm not left with a list of complaints without any solution. Thankfully when I listen to Jesus I hear of the hope he offers, the life he offers, the joy he offers. I get to start living. Living the life he offers, leaving complaint, living the solution.

So one of the challenges I'd like to see us as a community take on in 2012 is to read through the bible in a year. To read through the bible, not as an academic exercise but as a time of listening. A time of being open to Jesus, listening carefully to what he is saying, that we might be walking closely with him. For that's where life is to be found.

Each Christmas I hear people saying they want 'Peace'. This is what Jesus comes to create, as we share life with him, listening to him, following his lead through the wilderness, on our way to his Promised Land. Peace is found in living closely with God,

In Jesus, God listens to you!

where he is to be found and that is in the person of Jesus. So listening to Jesus as he leads us through this wilderness in which we now live is peace; is fullness life. I can listen to Jesus as he talks to us in the Sermon on the Mount. I can listen to Jesus as he speaks of the forgiveness he offers, and that I am now empowered through him to offer forgiveness. I can listen to Jesus and hear of the

great love the Father has for us, knowing that through baptism we've become the Father's loved children whom he is over the moon about, wanting to share his life with us.

I can listen to Jesus and discover true love, a love which is prepared to sacrifice itself so that the other person might live. Jesus' love is selfless, willing to pay the price that the other person might benefit. In the crib I hear God speaking through Jesus of his love. A love which draws us close, as he becomes one with us. As Jesus becomes our brother in flesh and blood. Jesus speaks of a love that isn't remote, but personal.

As I listen to Jesus I discover the Good News that in Jesus God is listening to me, to us! I discover the wonderful gift of communication through prayer that Jesus has