

the driver's seat and home we go. Or Jesus returns and we snub him doing our own thing, and are left behind, insecure, unloved, using each other; which all sounds rather hellish.

Does this suggest that the bible is a crucial book to devour?

It certain does to me. So let's not leave this to chance, let's all commit to reading the entire bible over this year. Find at least one other person and commit together to take on this challenge, regularly sharing the insights you receive from God. Let's do it.

Let us pray.

Jesus thank you for revealing yourself through the bible. Thank you for the this wonderful gift so we can come to know you more intimately, following you closely as we seek to build all our relationships from the relationship you have created for us to enjoy with you and your Father. Save us from good intent that comes to nothing. Help us to risk asking others to take on this challenge with us so we also grow in a healthy, loving, vibrant relationship with them as well as you. Amen.

Christ Church Lutheran

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



Jesus' disciples multiplying disciples

4 March 2012

LIFE IS ALL ABOUT RELATIONSHIPS (Read the entire bible this year—Let's Do It)

(Video introduction: Pete 1.)

Relationships can be tricky. I find it so easy to overdo one area and neglect another. What do you look to to maintain healthy and vibrant relationships?

Pete had come to the point where he felt alone and recognised that he needed to change. He could quite easily have felt betrayed by his friends, that they were all at fault, so they were the ones who needed to change. What guides you in the way you understand your relationships?

Relationships of course are at the heart of life. How do I know that? God told me. Every time I pick up the bible and read it it's about relationships; God's

relationship to me, to us and our relationship to each other.

The first reading we heard today was a relationship story, about God and Abram, who at ninety-nine is assured by the LORD that he will have a child, from whom a great nation will come. So God changes Abram's name; which means 'Exalted Father', to Abraham, which means 'Father of Many Nations'. Even though he doesn't have a child. Only a ninety plus year old wife! And then God says; 'Trust me'. That's the heartbeat of relationship, and Abram starts calling himself Abraham.

What a joke that must have been to people when Abraham introduced himself. The Father of many, and he

hasn't got any. But Abraham takes the LORD at his word and trusts him.

And what was the LORD doing through this commitment to Abraham? Seeking to rebuild his relationship with his children. Seeking to build a loving, vibrant, healthy relationship with his children. Because this relationship is in a horrible mess.

I know that the most important aspect of life is relationships because it's God's passion. So much so his passion leads him to die for us; what amazing passion we witness in Jesus and especially in his death on the cross.

And how do we know all this; quite simply because God in his wisdom got the people

who witnessed all these events to write it down. So now we have the wonderful privilege of being able to know clearly what's on God's mind. And amazingly, and thankfully, you are, we are, what is on God's heart and mind. In Jesus we see clearly that God's passion is to reach out and rebuild a healthy, loving, vibrant relationship with humanity, with us, with you.

And so at the heart of the bible we find a person. A person who pursues the one he love to hell and back. A person who is prepared to die for those he loves.

But sadly the story doesn't always end in roses. This love is often rejected.

What was the first step of discipleship as Jesus outlined it for us today? "Anyone who intends to come with me has to let me lead. You're not in the driver's seat: I

am." (Mark 8:34 Message) Sadly many people don't want Jesus in the driver's seat, they want to be boss and do it their way. The bible reminds me that it is quite possible to push Jesus away, and so miss out on the very reason we exist. It is possible to lose your soul, and

Life is about relationships. How do we know that?

there is nothing more tragic. Nothing more destructive of healthy, vibrant, loving relationships.

In Jesus the Good News is we start from a position of being loved; loved unconditionally by God. His love is real; out of his passion he has given his life for you so that you might be forgiven and adopted as his child. In Jesus we start loved, and loved people can love.

But you can't give what you don't have. I can't give away a billion dollars; I don't have it. Sadly the bible reminds me that when I'm born I'm born without a sense of God's love in my life. Left to myself I'll try and find something to make me feel good about myself;

which means without wanting to I'll be a user of people. I need you to feel good about myself. Or I'll look to things to make

me feel secure and look successful. I'll accumulate possessions, friends, degrees, achievements. But I can't give what I don't have. So relationships become distorted because of my wants and needs because of my distorted perspective, because of the emptiness that is left because of this broken relationship I'm born with.

Thank God that because of his passion,

because of Jesus being prepared to come and die, and be reborn, we too can be reborn. Reborn into a healthy relationship with God, a loving relationship with God, based on his loyalty, his faithfulness, his total commitment. I can trust Jesus, and live from the love I have in this relationship. I can trust Jesus with my life, he's given his life already, and he won't change his mind. So now I call God, Dad, my Heavenly Father. Wow!!!

How do we know this? It's in the bible. God's gift to his children so we can know him, so we can know ourselves, so we can build relationships from what we have. Life is all about relationships. And in Jesus these relationships can all be based on his love for us. These relationship can all become opportunities to give away what we have.

And the amazing aspect of God's love, the more you seek to give it away the more it grows and flourishes.

The bible also reminds me that the more I seek to get what I think is mine, the more I hoard to keep myself feeling safe, the less I have. Till finally if nothing

Jesus said; 'Love One Another'

changes I lose my very soul. I'd much rather be seeking to grow and flourish in Jesus relationship, trusting him, giving away so that others benefit. But it's a wrestle!

Would this suggest that the bible is an important book to read?

I love looking back at photo albums and remembering the life I've shared with my family. The photos remind me of the

importance of these relationships and the importance of not neglecting them, but of taking the initiative and always seeking to love them as I am loved by Jesus. And Jesus loves me by giving his life for me that I might benefit. It costs him everything that I might benefit.

When Jesus died on the cross, because of the Father's passion for us, what was in it for the Father? What was in it for Jesus? How am I letting Jesus shape the way I live and love? How are my relationships a living expression of God's love for us in Jesus? For in the bible I'm reminded from beginning to end that this is what life is all about.

How does the bible end? With a relationship; Jesus returns, so we can let him lead, getting in