

6th SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST**ST. PETERS ANGLICAN CHURCH BUNDOORA****Sunday 5th July 2026****Fr. Stephen Monsieigneur****Readings:**¹ Genesis 24:34-38 and 24:42-49, 58-67 / Psalm 45:10-17 / Romans 7:14-25 / Matthew 11:15-19, 25-30**Series Title:** **Called to Discipleship, who me? How?****Today's Theme:** ***"Called, Reoriented, Struggling, and Resting in Christ"*****Genesis 24:34-38 and 24:42-49, 58-67**

³⁴ So he said, "I am Abraham's servant. ³⁵ The Lord has greatly blessed my master, and he has become wealthy; he has given him flocks and herds, silver and gold, male and female slaves, camels and donkeys. ³⁶ And Sarah my master's wife bore a son to my master when she was old, and he has given him all that he has. ³⁷ My master made me swear, saying, 'You shall not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites in whose land I live, ³⁸ but you shall go to my father's house, to my kindred, and get a wife for my son.'

⁴² "I came today to the spring and said, 'O Lord, God of my master Abraham, if now you will only make successful the way I am going! ⁴³ I am standing here by the spring of water; let the young woman who comes out to draw, to whom I shall say, "Please give me a little water from your jar to drink," ⁴⁴ and who will say to me, "Drink, and I will draw for your camels also"—let her be the woman whom the Lord has appointed for my master's son.'

⁴⁵ "Before I had finished speaking in my heart, there was Rebekah coming out with her water jar on her shoulder, and she went down to the spring and drew. I said to her, 'Please let me drink.' ⁴⁶ She quickly let down her jar from her shoulder and said, 'Drink, and I will also water your camels.' So I drank, and she also watered the camels. ⁴⁷ Then I asked her, 'Whose daughter are you?' She said, 'The daughter of Bethuel, Nahor's son, whom Milcah bore to him.' So I put the ring on her nose and the bracelets on her arms. ⁴⁸ Then I bowed my head and worshiped the Lord and blessed the Lord, the God of my master Abraham, who had led me by the right way to obtain the daughter of my master's kinsman for his son. ⁴⁹ Now then, if you will deal loyally and truly with my master, tell me; and if not, tell me, so that I may turn either to the right hand or to the left."

⁵⁸ And they called Rebekah and said to her, "Will you go with this man?" She said, "I will." ⁵⁹ So they sent away their sister Rebekah and her nurse along with Abraham's servant and his men. ⁶⁰ And they blessed Rebekah and said to her, "May you, our sister, become thousands of myriads; may your offspring gain possession of the gates of their foes."

⁶¹ Then Rebekah and her maids rose up, mounted the camels, and followed the man, and the servant took Rebekah and went his way.

⁶² Now Isaac had come from Beer-lahai-roi and was settled in the Negeb. ⁶³ Isaac went out in the evening to walk in the field, and, looking up, he saw camels coming. ⁶⁴ And Rebekah

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looked up, and when she saw Isaac, she slipped quickly from the camel ⁶⁵ and said to the servant, “Who is the man over there, walking in the field to meet us?” The servant said, “It is my master.” So she took her veil and covered herself. ⁶⁶ And the servant told Isaac all the things that he had done. ⁶⁷ Then Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah’s tent. He took Rebekah, and she became his wife, and he loved her. So Isaac was comforted after his mother’s death.

Psalm 45:10-17

Ode for a Royal Wedding

To the leader: according to Lilies. Of the Korahites. A Maskil. A love song.

¹⁰ Hear, O daughter, consider and incline your ear;
 forget your people and your father’s house,
¹¹ and the king will desire your beauty.
 Since he is your lord, bow to him;
¹² Daughter Tyre will seek your favor with gifts,
 the richest of the people ¹³ with all kinds of wealth.
 The princess is decked in her chamber with gold-woven robes;
¹⁴ in many-colored robes she is led to the king;
 behind her the virgins, her companions, follow.
¹⁵ With joy and gladness they are led along
 as they enter the palace of the king.
¹⁶ In the place of ancestors you, O king, shall have sons;
 you will make them princes in all the earth.
¹⁷ I will cause your name to be celebrated in all generations;
 therefore the peoples will praise you forever and ever.

Romans 7:14-25

The Inner Conflict

¹⁴ For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am of the flesh, sold into slavery under sin. ¹⁵ I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. ¹⁶ Now if I do what I do not want, I agree that the law is good. ¹⁷ But in fact it is no longer I who do it but sin that dwells within me. ¹⁸ For I know that the good does not dwell within me, that is, in my flesh. For the desire to do the good lies close at hand, but not the ability. ¹⁹ For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do. ²⁰ Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I who do it but sin that dwells within me.
²¹ So I find it to be a law that, when I want to do what is good, evil lies close at hand. ²² For I delight in the law of God in my inmost self, ²³ but I see in my members another law at war with the law of my mind, making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members. ²⁴ Wretched person that I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? ²⁵ Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!
 So then, with my mind I am enslaved to the law of God, but with my flesh I am enslaved to the law of sin.

Matthew 11:15-19, 25-30

¹⁵ Let anyone with ears listen!

¹⁶ “But to what will I compare this generation? It is like children sitting in the marketplaces and calling to one another,

¹⁷ ‘We played the flute for you, and you did not dance;
we wailed, and you did not mourn.’

¹⁸ “For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, ‘He has a demon’; ¹⁹ the Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, ‘Look, a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!’ Yet wisdom is vindicated by her deeds.”

²⁰ Then he began to reproach the cities in which most of his deeds of power had been done because they did not repent. ²¹ “Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the deeds of power done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. ²² But I tell you, on the day of judgment it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon than for you. ²³ And you, Capernaum, will you be exalted to heaven?

No, you will be brought down to Hades.

“For if the deeds of power done in you had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. ²⁴ But I tell you that on the day of judgment it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom than for you.”

²⁵ At that time Jesus said, “I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and the intelligent and have revealed them to infants; ²⁶ yes, Father, for such was your gracious will. ²⁷ All things have been handed over to me by my Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

²⁸ “Come to me, all you who are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. ²⁹ Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰ For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”

SERMON

In a world marked by uncertainty, displacement, and deep social fractures, the question of relevance presses upon the Church:

What does discipleship mean today?

The Scriptures before us speak powerfully into this question, revealing that Christian discipleship is not abstract theology, but a lived response to God – a response that engages both the heart and the realities of our world. A response where service to God through service to others and ourselves is lived discipleship. - Preaching in action.

In Genesis 24, we encounter Rebekah at a decisive moment. Having heard of God’s promise, she responds simply yet profoundly: *“I will go”*².

²Genesis 24:58

See how Her decision is made without full knowledge of the future. This is the essence of discipleship—trusting obedience in response to God’s initiative.

In a modern context, where people face uncertainty about work, migration, identity, and belonging, Rebekah’s courage speaks clearly. Discipleship calls all who claim to be Christian to step into God’s purposes even amid ambiguity, advocating for justice, welcoming the stranger, and living with faith rather than fear.

Psalm 45 deepens this call by framing discipleship as a reorientation of belonging: *“forget your people and your father’s house”*³.

While at first one might react with surprise, this statement is not a rejection of identity but a transformation of loyalty.

In today’s world, where nationalism, tribalism, and division often dominate, discipleship invites a different allegiance—one rooted in God’s kingdom. -- It challenges Christians (us) to resist systems that offer division and instead to embrace the acts that cultivate communities of inclusion, dignity, and reconciliation. --- The Church becomes a space where identity is no longer shaped by exclusion, but by grace. Where culture is not the determining factor of the rights of an individual.

Yet, --- discipleship is not without struggle.

Paul in his letter to the Romans, offers a deeply honest account of the human condition: *“I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do”*⁴.

While centuries old, Paul’s words resonate profoundly even today in a society grappling with personal and structural brokenness—wars, individualism, addiction, inequality, environmental neglect, and moral fatigue. Paul reminds us that discipleship is not about perfection but about truthfulness. It acknowledges the inner conflict between sin and grace. --- Importantly, -- this struggle does not lead to despair but to dependence on God: *“Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!”*⁵. --- For modern disciples, this means confronting injustice and personal failings with humility, trusting that transformation comes through grace, not human effort alone.

The Gospel of Matthew brings us to the heart of discipleship in Christ’s invitation: *“Come to me, all you who are weary and carrying heavy burdens... for my yoke is easy, and my burden is light”*⁶. This is profoundly relevant in an age of burnout, anxiety, and relentless productivity. Jesus does not remove the call to discipleship, but he transforms it. His “yoke” signifies shared life and learning—discipleship as apprenticeship to Christ. In contrast to societal pressures that demand performance and success, Jesus offers rest rooted in relationship.

³Psalm 45:10

⁴ Romans 7:19

⁵ Rom. 7:25

⁶ Matt. 11:28, 30

Moreover, Jesus highlights a contrast between childlike openness and societal resistance⁷. In a world often driven by self-sufficiency and scepticism, discipleship requires humility—the willingness to receive rather than control. It calls Christians to embody an alternative way of life marked by gentleness, compassion, and trust. This is not to be mistaken for weakness and submission where the need to stand for justice exists but rather it is a model by which a Christian response is made.

This holistic vision of discipleship is a journey that begins with God’s call, reshapes our allegiances, confronts our struggles, and is sustained by Christ’s grace. Importantly, this is not merely personal but communal. In addressing contemporary issues—social inequality, exclusion, mental health struggles, and environmental crises—discipleship becomes a lived witness. It calls the Church to be present in the world as a community of hope, justice, and rest.

The relevance of Christianity today lies not in abstract belief, but in embodied discipleship. Like Rebekah, we are called to go. Like the psalmist, we are called to belong differently. Like Paul, we acknowledge our struggle. And following Jesus invitation, we come to learn and to rest.

In doing so, we discover that discipleship is not a burden to bear alone, but a life to be lived together and in Christ, a life that speaks meaningfully and compassionately into the needs of our time and place.

Let us pray

Gracious God, as you called Rebekah, strengthen our faith to follow. Amid our struggles, draw us to Christ’s gentle yoke. Transform our hearts by your grace, that we may live as faithful disciples, bearing hope, justice, and love in the world. Amen.

Reference

New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition Bible. (2021). National Council of Churches of Christ in the United States of America.

⁷ Matt. 11:25–26