

St Peter's Anglican Church, Bundoora

7th Sunday After Pentecost

Sunday 07/07/2024

Reading **2 Samuel 5:1-5, 9-10 / Ps 48 / 2 Corinthians 12:2-10 / Mark 6:1-13**

(Readings are from New Revised Standard Version, Anglicised)

Sermon Theme: *Life found in the mundane*

By Rev'd Stephen Monsieigneur

2 Samuel 5:1-5, 9-10

¹ Then all the tribes of Israel came to David at Hebron, and said, 'Look, we are your bone and flesh. ² For some time, while Saul was king over us, it was you who led out Israel and brought it in. The LORD said to you: It is you who shall be shepherd of my people Israel, you who shall be ruler over Israel.' ³ So all the elders of Israel came to the king at Hebron; and King David made a covenant with them at Hebron before the LORD, and they anointed David king over Israel. ⁴ David was thirty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned for forty years. ⁵ At Hebron he reigned over Judah for seven years and six months; and at Jerusalem he reigned over all Israel and Judah for thirty-three years. ⁹ David occupied the stronghold, and named it the city of David. David built the city all around from the Millo inwards. ¹⁰ And David became greater and greater, for the LORD, the God of hosts, was with him.

Ps 48

¹ Great is the Lord and greatly to be praised:
in the city of our God.
² High and beautiful is his holy hill:
it is the joy of all the earth.
³ On Mount Zion, where godhead truly dwells,
stands the city of the Great King:
God is well known in her palaces as a sure defence.
⁴ For the kings of the earth assembled:
they gathered together and came on;
⁵ They saw, they were struck dumb:
they were astonished and fled in terror.
⁶ Trembling took hold on them, and anguish:
as on a woman in her travail;
⁷ Like the breath of the east wind:
that shatters the ships of Tarshish.
⁸ As we have heard, so have we seen
in the city of the Lord of hosts:
in the city of our God,
which God has established for ever.
⁹ We have called to mind your loving-kindness, O God:
in the midst of your temple.
¹⁰ As your name is great, O God, so also is your praise:
even to the ends of the earth.
¹¹ Your right hand is full of victory
—let Zion's hill rejoice:
let the daughters of Judah be glad,
because of your judgements.

- ¹² Walk about Zion, go round about her,
and count all her towers;
consider well her ramparts, pass through her palaces;
¹³ That you may tell those who come after that such is God:
our God for ever and ever, and he will guide us eternally.

2 Corinthians 12:2-10

² I know a person in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know; God knows. ³ And I know that such a person—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know; God knows— ⁴ was caught up into Paradise and heard things that are not to be told, that no mortal is permitted to repeat. ⁵ On behalf of such a one I will boast, but on my own behalf I will not boast, except of my weaknesses. ⁶ But if I wish to boast, I will not be a fool, for I will be speaking the truth. But I refrain from it, so that no one may think better of me than what is seen in me or heard from me, ⁷ even considering the exceptional character of the revelations. Therefore, to keep me from being too elated, a thorn was given to me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to torment me, to keep me from being too elated. ⁸ Three times I appealed to the Lord about this, that it would leave me, ⁹ but he said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in weakness.' So, I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me. ¹⁰ Therefore I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities for the sake of Christ; for whenever I am weak, then I am strong.

Mark 6:1-13

¹ He left that place and came to his home town, and his disciples followed him. ² On the sabbath he began to teach in the synagogue, and many who heard him were astounded. They said, 'Where did this man get all this? What is this wisdom that has been given to him? What deeds of power are being done by his hands! ³ Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary and brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon, and are not his sisters here with us?' And they took offence at him. ⁴ Then Jesus said to them, 'Prophets are not without honour, except in their home town, and among their own kin, and in their own house.' ⁵ And he could do no deed of power there, except that he laid his hands on a few sick people and cured them. ⁶ And he was amazed at their unbelief. Then he went about among the villages teaching. ⁷ He called the twelve and began to send them out two by two, and gave them authority over the unclean spirits. ⁸ He ordered them to take nothing for their journey except a staff; no bread, no bag, no money in their belts; ⁹ but to wear sandals and not to put on two tunics. ¹⁰ He said to them, 'Wherever you enter a house, stay there until you leave the place. ¹¹ If any place will not welcome you and they refuse to hear you, as you leave, shake off the dust that is on your feet as a testimony against them.' ¹² So they went out and proclaimed that all should repent. ¹³ They cast out many demons, and anointed with oil many who were sick and cured them.

SERMON.

Who are you really?

Mark's passage today continues this focus on faith, but his context changes. Instead of Jesus being the outsider, the welcomed visitor, even when little is known of him except his recent ministry works, he has now returned home to Nazareth, to his family and friends, the people who know the pre-ministry Jesus better than any others, and they reject the missionary Jesus.

There are two distinct lessons in today's Gospel, the first 'recognising Christ is presence in the ordinary' and second that it is from the ordinary that Christ seeks disciples.

Consider Marks narrative. Jesus while entering communities in which he, as a person with family, childhood friends, trade skills, etc, was unknown is welcomed. With little knowledge of the full person, Jesus is welcomed and given opportunity to explain his thoughts and people see truth in his action and words. Yet at home, among the people who know him best he is scorned, his actions and authority are ridiculed.

Imagine you are his neighbour, you know his family, his mother and father, his siblings. You grew up with Jesus, told childhood stories, played games. You shared his joys and challenges as he trained to be a carpenter, just as he shared yours. You knew him. Jesus is just part of the everyday like the everyone you know. Then Jesus begins this mission, he leaves home and wanders to other communities, you hear reports he has begun preaching of redemption and salvation, these reports begin to include claims that he is healing people of various ailments. He even brought a young girl back from the dead. ---- Come on! This is Jesus from next door.

After a while Jesus returns home. By now he is something of a curiosity, he has a following which he brings home with him. He is allowed to teach in the synagogue even though he is not qualified. Jesus the guy you grew up with, the carpenter is now being given privilege he would not normally have, maybe envy has made itself felt – if only a little. After all who does Jesus think he is?

There is a bit of laughter as you talk of the gullibility of the Copernican's, but you are up to the game that Jesus is playing, after all he is one of your own, a Nazarene, and everyone knows that nothing good comes out of Nazareth. This was a sad situation as their attitude made them blind to the truth, the boundless possibilities through which God can work.

Most of you here today know me as Reverend or Father Stephen. This knowledge combined with personal experiences and expectations within and without the church context work to formulate an image of what you might expect me to be. Some will see me albeit with a specific role, much like themselves trying to grow deeper in relationship with God as I deal with the tests and challenges of life. Others may see a priest as the dominating persona, and this being the catalyst for thinking I somehow have a different or more seamless relationship with God. Whether at church or at home while my qualifications, my ordination are constants, how I am received is not. At home I am not seen or treated as a priest but a husband and dad. At home I make my own coffee, there is no expectation that I am in any way above others.

Some years ago, shortly after I was ordained an elderly lifetime parishioner advised me that one of my daughters was at the office. Upon reaching my daughter the parishioner fondly commented on the pride my daughter must have felt with her dad being the priest for that

community. My daughter's reaction: yes, he [dad] has worked hard, and I am happy you are glad he is the priest, but he is my dad and I need some money from him.

Here is a question for you as you sit in St Peter's today, July 7, 2024.

In what way is Jesus' present in your life, do you recognise him?

How do you know?

What is the significance of this knowledge in how you live?

The tribes of Israel in our first reading realised the incredible presence of God being with David. They did not consider David's authority of his own making, but rather God's blessing on him and over their nation. After all, David had no qualifications, was not more than an adolescent by contemporary understanding, he was a shepherd not a soldier and had no leadership credentials. Yet, this apparently insignificant boy defeated a giant, a feared warrior. The Israelites view was formed by their witness of David's acts and words. David always referred to, and credited his success to God. The people had faith in the leadership of David based on the belief God was with him.

The same is found in Paul's second letter to the Corinthians where in today's verses Paul begins to tell the story of his supernatural experience of being taken to "the third heaven." There he was shown otherwise unknowable truths by Christ.

The third heaven often referred to as the highest heaven, is the place created by God where He lives and where angels praise Him (1 Kings 8:27; Nehemiah 9:6; Psalm 148:4). Most commentators understand the first heaven to be the sky above the earth. The second would be the realm of the sun, moon, and stars: what we would now refer to as outer space. Thus, the third is beyond perception.

Paul is so deeply concerned not to be arrogant that he first describes this experience as happening to a man he knows rather than identifying himself as the man (2 Corinthians 12:6-7). Paul seems fully committed to not receiving any personal credit for this experience, emphasizing that only God knows whether he physically travelled to the third heaven in his body or whether it was an out-of-body experience. Paul's humility was so poignant in his illustration and experience that it was used by his enemies as a criticism (2 Corinthians 10:1).

Paul's experience is a reminder that standing up for what we believe to be true is not always met with positive reaction. At times we will be persecuted in some degree for our stance, but this is the test of our faith, especially when the cost is significant.

Interesting is Paul's statement that this happened 14 years before the time of this writing. That would put the experience sometime around AD 42-44, prior to his own first missionary journey. Through my own experience, recognising Christ's call and discerning the direction he desires us to go can take time, and we should not act before we are confident that it is Christ calling.

Once we recognise the call however, we must respond. We cannot put restrictions or conditions in the way, we must realise that nothing, not even our lives is ours but rather a gift from God step forward in faith.

Knowing Jesus as the Christ is not enough just as attending church as part of a weekly ritual is not enough. We are called to imbed our faith into every part of our being. It must guide every part of our lives and relationships. We will be ridiculed by those closest to us, they will point out our short comings as they perceive them. They will highlight what they see as our foolishness, but in our faith, we have a hope that only God can promise.

Faith does not mean believing impossible things are true, rather faith is a loving trust in what God is doing through Jesus and his disciples, and an openness to the Kingdom of God. This was the faith of the woman with the haemorrhage, for this Jesus as God calls her daughter. Her trust has brought healing, but this is a trust not reflected by the Nazarenes and as Mark records, Jesus could perform no miracles there.

Do you trust Jesus?

AMEN