

9th SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST**ST. PETERS ANGLICAN CHURCH BUNDOORA****Sunday 26th July 2026****Fr. Stephen Monsieigneur****Readings:**¹ Genesis 29:15-28 / Psalm 105:1-11 / Romans 8:26-39 / Matthew 13:44-58.**Series Title:** **Called to Discipleship, Who Me? How?****Today's Theme:** ***"Discipleship and the Love from Which Nothing Can Separate Us"*****Genesis 29:15-28*****Jacob Marries Laban's Daughters***

¹⁵ Then Laban said to Jacob, "Because you are my kinsman, should you therefore serve me for nothing? Tell me, what shall your wages be?" ¹⁶ Now Laban had two daughters; the name of the elder was Leah, and the name of the younger was Rachel. ¹⁷ Leah's eyes were weak, but Rachel was graceful and beautiful. ¹⁸ Jacob loved Rachel, so he said, "I will serve you seven years for your younger daughter Rachel." ¹⁹ Laban said, "It is better that I give her to you than that I should give her to any other man; stay with me." ²⁰ So Jacob served seven years for Rachel, and they seemed to him but a few days because of his love for her.

²¹ Then Jacob said to Laban, "Give me my wife that I may go in to her, for my time is completed." ²² So Laban gathered together all the people of the place and made a feast. ²³ But in the evening he took his daughter Leah and brought her to Jacob, and he went in to her. ²⁴ (Laban gave his maid Zilpah to his daughter Leah to be her maid.) ²⁵ When morning came, it was Leah! And Jacob said to Laban, "What is this you have done to me? Did I not serve with you for Rachel? Why then have you deceived me?" ²⁶ Laban said, "This is not done in our country—giving the younger before the firstborn. ²⁷ Complete the week of this one, and we will give you the other also in return for serving me another seven years." ²⁸ Jacob did so and completed her week; then Laban gave him his daughter Rachel as a wife.

Psalm 105:1-11***God's Faithfulness to Israel***

- ¹ O give thanks to the Lord; call on his name;
make known his deeds among the peoples.
- ² Sing to him, sing praises to him;
tell of all his wonderful works.
- ³ Glory in his holy name;
let the hearts of those who seek the Lord rejoice.
- ⁴ Seek the Lord and his strength;
seek his presence continually.
- ⁵ Remember the wonderful works he has done,
his miracles and the judgments he has uttered,
- ⁶ O offspring of his servant Abraham,
children of Jacob, his chosen ones.

¹ All scriptural quotations are lifted from New Revised Standard Version, Updated Edition. (NRSVUE)
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⁷ He is the Lord our God;
 his judgments are in all the earth.
⁸ He is mindful of his covenant forever,
 of the word that he commanded for a thousand generations,
⁹ the covenant that he made with Abraham,
 his sworn promise to Isaac,
¹⁰ which he confirmed to Jacob as a statute,
 to Israel as an everlasting covenant,
¹¹ saying, "To you I will give the land of Canaan
 as your portion for an inheritance."

Romans 8:26-39

²⁶ Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness, for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with groanings too deep for words. ²⁷ And God, who searches hearts, knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

²⁸ We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose. ²⁹ For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn within a large family. ³⁰ And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.

³¹ What then are we to say about these things? If God is for us, who is against us? ³² He who did not withhold his own Son but gave him up for all of us, how will he not with him also give us everything else? ³³ Who will bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. ³⁴ Who is to condemn? It is Christ who died, or rather, who was raised, who is also at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us. ³⁵ Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will affliction or distress or persecution or famine or nakedness or peril or sword? ³⁶ As it is written,

"For your sake we are being killed all day long;
 we are accounted as sheep to be slaughtered."

³⁷ No, in all these things we are more than victorious through him who loved us. ³⁸ For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, ³⁹ nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Matthew 13:44-58

Three Parables

⁴⁴ "The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and reburied; then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.

⁴⁵ "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls; ⁴⁶ on finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had and bought it.

⁴⁷ "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was thrown into the sea and caught fish of every kind; ⁴⁸ when it was full, they drew it ashore, sat down, and put the good into baskets but threw out the bad. ⁴⁹ So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come out and

separate the evil from the righteous ⁵⁰ and throw them into the furnace of fire, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

⁵¹ “Have you understood all this?” They answered, “Yes.” ⁵² And he said to them, “Therefore every scribe who has become a disciple in the kingdom of heaven is like the master of a household who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old.” ⁵³ When Jesus had finished these parables, he left that place.

⁵⁴ He came to his hometown and began to teach the people in their synagogue, so that they were astounded and said, “Where did this man get this wisdom and these deeds of power? ⁵⁵ Is not this the carpenter’s son? Is not his mother called Mary? And are not his brothers James and Joseph and Simon and Judas? ⁵⁶ And are not all his sisters with us? Where then did this man get all this?” ⁵⁷ And they took offence at him. But Jesus said to them, “Prophets are not without honor except in their own hometown and in their own house.” ⁵⁸ And he did not do many deeds of power there, because of their unbelief.

SERMON

Since Pentecost, we have been looking at discipleship; we have reflected on what it means to follow Jesus: to trust his call wholeheartedly and to shape our lives according to his life—a life marked by compassion, forgiveness, generosity, and love. Today, Paul’s triumphant declaration in Romans 8 brings these reflections into sharp focus: “For [Paul says] I am convinced that neither death, nor life... nor anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord”²

What are Christians as disciples of Jesus to make of this statement? Firstly, it is not merely a comforting promise offered to anxious believers. It is the foundation of discipleship itself. We do not follow Jesus in order to earn God’s love; we follow because we have already been embraced by that love. Paul reminds us that the Christian life begins not with our achievement, but with God’s grace.

Earlier in the chapter, Paul writes that the Spirit “helps us in our weakness” and intercedes for us when we do not know how to pray³. Discipleship, therefore, is not the journey only of the spiritually strong, but of those who trust that God remains faithful amid weakness, uncertainty, and struggle.

The story of Jacob illustrates this reality. Jacob’s life is marked by deception, disappointment, and waiting. Having worked seven years to marry Rachel, he is himself deceived and must work another seven years⁴. Yet God’s covenant purposes continue despite human shortcomings. The passage reminds us that discipleship unfolds in real life, with all its complexities. Following God is not a smooth path of uninterrupted success; it is learning to trust God’s faithfulness even when circumstances disappoint us.

² Romans 8:38–39

³ Rom. 8:26

⁴ Genesis 29:15–28

Deepening this theme, the psalmist calls God's people to "remember the wonderful works [God] has done"⁵. The psalm points back to God's covenant with Abraham and celebrates divine faithfulness across generations. Christian discipleship is not just about looking forward and the next step; it is also an act of remembering. In a world that prizes novelty, progress, and self-reliance, disciples remember that their identity is grounded in God's promises rather than personal accomplishments.

Jesus' parables in Matthew 13 offer another perspective. The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in a field and like a pearl of great value. In both stories, people give up everything to obtain what they have discovered. The point is not reckless sacrifice; rather, it is that the kingdom is worth more than anything else. Discipleship involves reordered priorities. When we truly encounter Christ, our understanding of success changes. Wealth, status, influence, and comfort cease to be ultimate. The kingdom becomes our greatest treasure.

Yet Matthew also ends with the rejection of Jesus in his hometown⁶. Remember how those closest to Jesus could not recognise the presence of God because they were constrained by familiarity and expectation. This is a warning for each of us and for the church. We can be surrounded by the language of faith and still fail to recognise where God is calling us to deeper trust and obedience.

What, then, does this mean for us, the faith community of St Peter's Bundoora?

Well, we live in a culture that often measures success through possessions, achievement, visibility, and personal advancement. The church is called to offer a different witness. Where numbers, buildings, influence, or prestige do not determine our success. Rather, it is measured by faithfulness to Christ.

This witness becomes visible in practical ways. We express discipleship when we choose generosity over accumulation, hospitality over exclusion, forgiveness over resentment, and service over self-interest. We express it when we listen to those who are lonely, support those who are struggling, welcome those who feel forgotten, and advocate for those whose voices are ignored. We express it when our life together demonstrates that people matter more than possessions and relationships matter more than status.

Such practices may appear ordinary, even insignificant. Yet they are powerful precisely because they reflect the character of Jesus. They reveal a community whose confidence rests not in worldly measures of success but in the conviction that nothing can separate us from God's love.

This, ultimately, is the nature of Christian discipleship. It is not heroic perfection. It is a lifelong response to grace. It is trusting the call of Jesus, treasuring the kingdom above all else, remembering God's faithfulness, and allowing the Spirit to form Christ's character within us. It is living as people who know that God's love is stronger than failure, suffering, uncertainty, or death itself.

⁵ Psalm 105:5

⁶ Matt. 13:53–58

And because nothing can separate us from that love, we are free to live courageously, generously, and faithfully in the service of Christ and his kingdom.

Let us pray.

Lord Jesus,

You have called us to follow you. Help us to trust your call, to treasure your kingdom above all else, and to walk in your way of compassion, forgiveness, generosity, and love.

By your Spirit, shape us into faithful disciples, so that the people of St Peter's may reflect your grace in our community and bear witness to your love in the world.

For we know that nothing can separate us from your love.

Amen.

References

Holy Bible, New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition. (2021). National Council of Churches.