

Anglican Church of the Holy Cross

May 2014



A way in the wilderness

Has your path in life led you into a wilderness? They are lonely, dry places. Perhaps your friends are enjoying their families, their health, their marriages, their work, and their leisure time. Meanwhile, you face family disruptions, or constant pain, or daily arguments, or misery Monday-Friday, or financial worries, and the thought of a holiday is a just a daydream.

God made a promise to the Israelites long ago that holds true today: 'I will make a way in the wilderness...' (Is 35) He knows where you are, and he has not forgotten you. Sometimes we could wish he'd send a helicopter to get us out of our wilderness. But wise Christians learn to accept the deserts of life, because it is in the desert that we discover the sweetness of God's love for us.

In Deuteronomy it says that Jacob learned to suck honey out of the rock! Non-Christians need to have the honeycombs of life before they can enjoy any sweetness. But Christians can take the difficult things of life and know that Jesus will help them find the nourishment they need in the midst of the wilderness. Remember the promise: 'The Lord himself goes before you and will be with you. He will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid, do not be discouraged.' Deut. 31.8

UPCOMING EVENTS

Wednesdays 7th, 14th, 21st, 28th
10.30am mainly music

Thursdays 1st, 8th, 15, 22nd, 29th
4.00 pm Kids Plus+

Sunday 4th
10.30am Church Council

Saturday 10th
8.30am Jumble Sale

Saturday 10th
3.00pm Mother & Daughter High Tea

Monday 12th
1.00pm MU Australia

Tuesday 13th
9.00am Home-group Study

Thursday 22nd
10.00am Biggest Morning Tea

Devotional Thought

Growing a Servant's Heart

We have seen how David was anointed to be the next king of Israel. God used the madness of Saul to help train the shepherd boy for his role as king (1 Samuel 16:18-19). God uses the same tools to grow us, so that he can use us as his servants in our church, workplace and community.

God uses solitude: It was on the hills with his sheep that David learned how to be alone with God and himself (19). Away from distractions, David learned how to hear the voice of God and discern his purpose for his life.

We shouldn't fear times of solitude, as they are vital if we are to hear his voice and walk with him. We need time to be alone with God and find a place where you can hear his voice without the distractions of life clamouring for our attention.

God uses secrecy: David also learned the lessons of servanthood in obscurity, before he was called to public office (18). He learned 'how to play the harp', so that at the right time he would be called into Saul's service. In his experience of protecting his sheep against lions and bears (cf 17: 34, 35), David learned the art of being 'a brave man and a warrior'.

We should never despise the days of obscurity, when we can feel we are not being used much by God. He knows where we are and in his time, he will use us when, where and to the extent he chooses.

God uses sameness: David must have found the monotony of keeping his father's sheep quite difficult, knowing that he was the anointed king. However, it was in the routine of life that he learned the valuable lesson of faithfulness. David applied himself to giving his best during the mundane times of life. As a result it was evident that 'the Lord is with him',



Psalms 31

In You, O LORD, I put my trust;
Let me never be ashamed;
Deliver me in Your righteousness.



as God the sameness of his life to shape David for bigger things.

We are also called to keep faithful in the small things in our lives, especially in our workplace and with friends and family. As we live consistently for Jesus on a daily basis, God will bring us into those places and relationships where we can be effective witnesses for him.

'All we have to decide is what to do with the time that is given to us.' (Gandalf in 'The Lord of the Rings')

Ascension Day - 40 Days with the Risen Christ

40 days after Easter comes Ascension Day. It may seem crazy to call it Eastertide when Easter is clearly over! - but these are the 40 days during which the Risen Christ appeared again and again to his disciples, following his death and resurrection.

The Gospels give us little of Christ's teachings and deeds during those forty days. Jesus was seen by numerous disciples: on the road to Emmaus, by the Sea of Galilee, in houses, etc. He strengthened and encouraged his disciples, and at last opened their eyes to all that the Scriptures had promised about the Messiah. Jesus also told them that as the Father had sent him, he was now going to send them - to all corners of the earth, as his witnesses.

Check out: Matthew 28; Mark 16; Luke 24; and John 20. Surely the most tender, moving 'farewell' in history took place on Ascension Day. Luke records the story with great poignancy: "When Jesus had led them out to the vicinity of Bethany, he lifted up his hands - and blessed them."

As Christmas began the story of Jesus' life on earth, so Ascension Day completes it, with his return to his Father in heaven. Jesus' last act on earth was to bless his disciples. He and they had a bond as close as could be: they had just lived through three tumultuous years of public ministry and miracles - persecution and death - and resurrection! Just as we part from our nearest and dearest by still looking at them with love and memories in our eyes, so exactly did Jesus: "While he was blessing them, he left them and was taken up into heaven." (Luke 24:50-1) He was not forsaking them, but merely going on ahead to a kingdom which would also be theirs one day: "I am ascending to my Father and to your Father, to my God and your God..." (John 20:17)

The disciples were surely the most favoured folk in history. Imagine being one of the last few people on earth to be face to face with Jesus, and have him look on you with love. No wonder then that Luke goes on: "they worshipped him - and returned to Jerusalem with great joy. And they stayed continually at the temple, praising God." (Luke 24:52,53)

No wonder they praised God! They knew they would see Jesus again one day! "I am going to prepare a place for you... I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am." (John 14:2,3) In the meantime, Jesus had work for them to do: to take the Gospel to every nation on earth.

Taking Time to Pray—

Please pray for refugees, asylum seekers, and all newcomers.

—that they may be welcomed and find peace in Australia
—that they may find hope and restoration from the despair and persecution from which they have fled
—that Christians can celebrate unity in Christ while celebrating our differences in cultures and nationalities
—that unaccompanied refugee children may be protected from all harm and reunited with loving families
—for migrant workers, that they may work in safe and just conditions, and that we who benefit from their labour may be truly grateful for what they provide.
—for an end to the violence and poverty that displace so many of our sisters and brothers from their homes and homelands.

Also: for our ministry through mainly music and Kids Plus+.

For all who are suffering through illness, grief or anxiety and those facing financial hardship.

For the guidance of the Holy Spirit in our church and community.

Our Annual meeting coming up in June, that those whom God is calling will be willing to stand for the various offices.



SERVICES & READINGS

Sunday 4th 9.00am Holy Communion
1 Peter 1:17-23, Acts 2:14a. 36-41, Luke 24:13-35

Wed. 7th 9.30am Holy Communion

Sunday 11th 9.00am Holy Communion
1 Peter 2:19-end, Acts 2:42-end, John 10:1-10

Wed. 14th 9.30am Holy Communion

Sunday 18th 9.00am Holy Communion
1 Peter 2:2-10, Acts 7:55-end, John 14:1-14

Wed. 21st 9.30am Holy Communion

Sunday 25th 9.00am Holy Communion
1 Peter 3:13-end, Acts 17:22-31, John 14:15-21

Wed 28th 9.30am Holy Communion

Sunday 1st June 9.00am Holy Communion
Ephesians 1:15-end, Acts 1:1-11, Luke 24:44-end

In Loving Memory

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