

find expression, in your words, in your actions, in your daily living.

So this week I'd encourage you to throw out any ideas that say you can't hear from the Spirit. Throw out those untruths for Jesus, through Joel has said you do. Clean out the temple and seek to be a place of prayer. Not just to pray, but to be a place of prayer, to discover the reality that in Jesus, Father is at home in you and invites you to be at home in him; living in that reality.

This week ask Jesus to send the Spirit that you might receive his vision, his dream, his prophecy, because his passion is to share his life with you. Open your heart to him. Clean house of the traditions, habits, customs, ways of living you've picked up that stop this reality. Invite Jesus to reveal

where to begin; and then do it, and ask what's next, and then do it.

This week ask each other; 'What's Jesus been saying?' When you meet a young person ask them what they hunger for? And help them explore why this hunger is there. Encourage them to explore what Jesus is saying.

This week ask your older men and women what dreams they've given up on. Ask them what dreams the Spirit is giving them, and encourage them to live it. It might be a simple dream; to be kind to the people you meet this week. It might be to buy a coffee for a stranger. It might be to pick up the paper for your elderly neighbour in the morning.

Don't miss what the Spirit is saying because you're looking for the spectacular so you'll feel good about yourself. You're loved by God, your significant to him, believe it, live it.

This week ask the Spirit what to say and then share the first thought you get. Why wouldn't your dreams and visions be from the Spirit? Why wouldn't your thoughts and prompting be from the Spirit? Ask him and grab the first thought and do it, all the time talking with Jesus about what's happening.

(Video: At home with Neil Gamble – Acts 2:14-21)

Christ Church Lutheran

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



Jesus' disciples multiplying disciples

4 March 2018

LISTENING TO GOD'S DREAMS & VISIONS

Acts 2:14-21

This week I had a wonderful convergence of ideas from God. Three separate thoughts that the Spirit brought together in my mind.

I had been watching a teaching video on Acts 2:14-21. Let me refresh your memory; this is part of Peter's sermon at the beginning of the church. Peter said; "Listen carefully... what you see was predicted long ago by the prophet Joel: 'In the last days (that's the time from Jesus ascension to his return. So what days are we living in, now? The last days. Joel, actually God through Joel, is talking about us, today.)'"

"In the last days,' God says, 'I will pour out my Spirit upon all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy. Your young men will see visions,

and our old men will dream dreams. In those days I will pour out my Spirit even on my servants – men and women alike – and they will prophesy." (Acts 2:17,18)

As I was watching this video I was going wow; I want that, wow what visions have our young people got. Wow what dreams are my mates the old men dreaming. Wow, the Spirit is speaking to us through visions and dreams.

The second thought came to me from the Gospel of Mark. I've been reading through the Gospel of Mark and I was impressed by Jesus forthright words; "You hypocrites! Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you, for he wrote, 'These people honour me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. Their worship is a farce,

for they teach man-made ideas as commands from God.' For you ignore God's law and substitute your own traditions." (Mark 7:6-8)

Jesus doesn't mix his words. I was struck by his forthright words, which got me asking myself; 'what traditions am I substituting for God's word?' I don't what to honour God with my lips if my heart is far from him. So I was reflecting on what gets in the road of my worshipping God from the heart. What's causing me to not hear what God is saying?

The third thought came to me as I looked at the Gospel reading for today, from John. Here Jesus cleans out the temple, which he refers to as his Father's house. Jesus declares the temple, his Father's house, to be a place of

prayer and not a market.

When I read this passage I always remind myself that the New Testament temple isn't a building. This building we are in is not Jesus Father's home. What is the New Testament temple, Father's home? We are; Jesus' brothers and sisters. We are the place Father lives. We are his temple, the place of prayer.

Then the Spirit began to weave these three thoughts together in my mind. First the temple, that's us, that's my life, our shared life is to be a place of prayer. We're not out to make a profit, we have nothing to sell.

Jesus has placed the Spirit within us, just as the prophet Joel said. At the start of the church Peter quoted, of all texts in the Old Testament, one that tells us of the Spirit living within us. Not symbolically, but really. The Spirit has been sent by Jesus to dwell in Father's house, that's

us, you and me. That's in you.

The Old Testament temple had been turned into a market place; with the best of intentions. Worship of God had become a business, and no doubt a profitable business. Where in my life have I crowded out Jesus, being busy keeping church traditions and not listening to the Spirit?

Where's my Passion for God's house? I'm not running a business. I'm seeking to live a relationship. I'm seeking to daily be in a conversational relationship with Father, the one who loves me, loves me affectionately, passionately. In Jesus, loves me intimately. I'm a house of prayer, a house of conversation with Father as we share life together.

That reminded me of the reading from Mark and Jesus' extremely direct words. 'You hypocrite!' I don't know about you, but I don't want to be a hypocrite.

The guys Jesus was talking to I'm sure didn't want to be hypocrites either, but that's what they'd become. That makes me nervous.

They were hypocrites because they'd let their ideas, their traditions, their way of doing things make them deaf to the very God they claimed to worship. He was standing there right in front of them and they didn't even recognise him.

In Joel we heard these promises from God; 'I will; notice the word is will not might. 'I will pour out my Spirit... your young people will see visions and your old people will dream, dreams... my servants – men and women alike – will prophesy.' The teaching video I was watching asked a simple question; 'where do we see this happening in the church today?' Please reflect on that; 'where do you see this happening in the church today?'

One tradition I grew up with, you mightn't have, but I grew up with the tradition that visions, dreams, prophecies only happened in the early church, not now. What might that tradition have done to my ability to hear from God?

It struck me that if I don't have a personal, conversational relationship with God, what am I left with? How can I be a house of prayer if I don't hear from God, or enter into daily conversation with him? Does anyone see a problem here?

I don't want to be left with a list of does and don'ts. I think Jesus died that we might have far more than a list of does and don'ts to follow. I'm sure that's why he got Peter to remind us of the prophesy from Joel, that the Spirit would take up residence in all of us; Father's home. And that all of us would have dreams and visions. That all of us would get thoughts, ideas, directions from

the Spirit – that's prophesy.

Prophesy isn't telling the future; it's hearing what he has said, living it. What is God saying to you today through the Spirit? Is he putting the idea into your mind to invite someone home for lunch? Then invite them. Open your hearts to the Spirit and let your mouth follow.

You are, we are, the temple of God. You are, we are, Father's home. In Jesus, isn't it great news to know Father feels at home with you and you can feel at home with him? Safe enough to listen and walk through life with him in a conversational, affectionate relationship of love. That is what Jesus has given his life to make a reality. That's why we celebrate Christmas, Easter, Pentecost, for they remind us of the reality Jesus created for us to live in daily with Father through the Spirit.

So I've been asking myself what traditions

have stopped me from receiving the visions and dreams that Jesus has been giving. What traditions have stopped me having an open heart to the Spirit and letting my mouth follow?

I'm not interested in something that isn't real. I'm not interested in simply following a lot of rules and regulations so that other people might think well of me. I'm over letting people make me feel guilty or scared of God as if he's some distant being who in reality plays no part in my life; apart from maybe making me feel guilty at times. I'm not interested in any of this rubbish.

I want to believe what Jesus has said through the prophet Joel. I want to set you free to hear the Spirit as he gives you a vision, a dream, a word from him to share. I want to encourage you to discover what Jesus through the Spirit is placing on your heart. I want to encourage you to let that vision, that dream, that word