

Jesus. And the Father is not limited by my navel gazing; he has so, so much more life dreamed possible for us to share and enjoy.

I can't even begin to imagine it, all I can imagine is this very limited experience I have. When Jesus returns what a feast on life we'll share. A feast we've started. We've started tasting Jesus' life, through the Spirit. In the Spirit we get a taste of Jesus' love. We get to, in a small way, experience the love of God for us through Jesus.

Our Father's passionate desire is that we not only get a taste but that we join him in the main course and feast on life with him.

How do you want to live?

If you want to exchange complaining, being self-focused, for a life lived with Jesus, being focused on him, taking him at his word, seeking to live life in all his fullness, then I invite you to join with me, in your heart, as we invite Jesus in.

Let's pray.
Jesus, focus my thoughts, my emotions, my desires, my hopes and dreams on you. There's no other person I want to shape me. There is no other person I'd want to follow. Jesus, I invite you to send the Spirit so that I live this week focused on you.

Each day I invite you to stop and focus on Jesus, sharing with him your joys and sorrows, then step out and enjoy Jesus' celebration of life.

Christ Church Lutheran

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



Jesus' disciples multiplying disciples

10 June 2018

HOW WOULD YOU LIKE TO BE LIVING?

2 Corinthians 4:13-5:1

When I read these words of Paul I thought to myself; 'this guy is the master of the understatement'. We heard Paul saying; "These hard times are small potatoes compared to the coming good times."

Here's a list of what Paul considered 'small potatoes'; "I have worked harder, been put in prison more often, been whipped times without number, and faced death again and again. Five different times the Jewish leaders gave me thirty-nine lashes. (*The sentence was 40 lashes but you only got 39 lashes as they believed 40 would kill you.*) Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I was stoned (*This was a form of capital punishment. Paul was literally left for dead*). Three times I was shipwrecked. Once

I spent a whole night and a day adrift at sea. I have travelled on many long journeys. I have faced danger from rivers and from robbers. I have faced danger from my own people, the Jews, as well as from the Gentiles. I have faced danger in the cities, in the deserts, and on the seas. And I have faced danger from men who claim to be believers but are not. I have worked hard and long, enduring many sleepless nights. I have been hungry and thirsty and have often gone without food. I have shivered in the cold, without enough clothing to keep me warm." (2 Cor. 11:23-27 NLT)

Did you pick up that Paul considered this 'small potatoes'! I stub my toe and think it's unfair.

Why do you think Paul thought this way? Why doesn't he go into a litany of complaint; 'Wow is me!' I think one lash of a whip would be enough to get me complaining. What gets you complaining?

Paul has literally laid his life on the line for these guys and now they are stabbing him in the back. He's not impressive enough. His preaching/teaching is a bit boring for their tastes. How would you have reacted?

Amazingly Paul's reaction was to write this letter; not to blast them, but to let them know of his love for them and the hope in Christ he has for them. He's still pouring out his life that they too might have life in Jesus, have the wonderful hope of life today with Jesus, of life with Jesus when he

returns and raises them in glorious new bodies.

Paul to me comes across as more concerned about the people in Corinth than he is about himself.

How would you like to be living? Complaining about how life is unfair, giving a litany of despair on the state of the world. Or would you like to be living like Paul, where it seems he's not controlled by what happens to him.

He's not embittered, he doesn't lose heart or give up.

How would you like to be living; Complaining, whinging, despairing, or full of hope, willing to go that extra bit for those who are giving you a hard time? How would you like to be living? Celebrating life with real hope in your heart. Hope for the future, which shines brightly onto today. How would you like to be living?

I think we'd all like to be more like Paul, where

what happens to you doesn't dominate you. I certainly want to be living more and more from what motivates me from the inside rather than being squashed and manipulated by external forces.

Where does this strength come from with Paul so that he can say; "Even though on

Paul's inner strength is found....?

the outside it often looks like things are falling apart on us, (*if I focus on the things that are falling apart, how do you think that will affect me? Where does Paul focus*)... on the inside, where God is making new life, not a day goes by without his unfolding grace." (2 Cor. 4:17)

Who thinks Paul's ability comes from being focused on the inside?

I don't.

When Paul says he's focused on the inside he's talking about more than simply only worrying about what he thinks and wants. If I no longer care about the world around me and just do what I want, that won't lead to freedom. I'll just become self-absorbed. I might even become selfish, which in the end

will also leave me wanting more, feeling spent. I've done as best I could, but it just doesn't seem to be enough.

When Paul says he focuses on the inside, he's talking about being focused on the Spirit, who Jesus has sent, so that we live in daily intimacy with Jesus; knowing his thoughts, sharing our feelings, walking through life person to person with Jesus.

Paul's inner strength is found in the person Jesus. The Jesus who encountered Paul and turned his whole life around.

Paul was passionate about following God, so committed that he was there giving his assent to the death of the first Christian martyr; Stephen. Paul was incredibly zealous. He wanted to weed out what he saw as a heresy, this new sect called 'The Way'.

'The Way' is the name first given to those who became Jesus' disciples. They followed Jesus. Not a set of rules, but they followed the one who they believed to be the rule writer. They followed this person Jesus; and in this relationship they were changed, and matured, growing to be more and more like Jesus.

They weren't navel gazing. For me that would be a total waste of time; I'm so limited in what I know, in what I perceive. If I focus on myself I'll simply end up trapped in a very, very small world. And before long guess what I'll be doing, that's right, complaining. Or

comparing and thinking how smart am I compared to the rest.

No Paul's focus is on Jesus, the person who encountered him, personally. An encounter which could have gone really bad. I mean to say if you are out to destroy a person, and then find yourself at their mercy,

Stop; Talk it over with Jesus; Do it!

defenceless, what would be going through your mind. I was trying to destroy him, is he going to destroy me?

To kill, steal and destroy just isn't Jesus' way. No, Jesus encounters Paul. Stops him in his tracks, and breathes his life into him. Jesus doesn't destroy Paul, he saves Paul from his own path of destruction. Jesus pours the Holy Spirit into Paul so that the fire he now breathes brings life, and light, and hope, and salvation.

And Paul knows that this life that Jesus has breathed into him is only the deposit on the wonderful new life Jesus has in store for us.

Today we get to taste the love, the grace, the mercy, we taste the essence of God in Jesus, through the Spirit. Tomorrow, when Jesus returns, in person, we'll be to enjoy the main course, feasting on life, person to person with Jesus.

No longer wasting away, but daily living in the life giving presence of our heavenly Father. Daily living, knowing deep in our souls his love for us. Not just knowing his love but daily experiencing it, because it is now our new reality.

I won't be shaped by any past hurt, or pain, or lose, or failure, or error, or impotence on my part. I will be shaped by Father's presence; growing to be the child he has created me to be in