

pass, but with the desire to grow in your relationship with him.

I invite you to jot down a few thoughts and then find the opportunity this week to share your story of life with Jesus with another person. And let them share their story with you.

If you were to ask me, I'd say that's the place to start. If I was to wipe the slate clean and start again, this is where I'd start, sharing, personally, our stories of life with Jesus. Sharing how I came to faith in Jesus, how that faith has grown and matured. Sharing how Jesus has pursued me, right into the dumbest of decisions I've made

It's Jesus who has gathered us to be his body in this time. It's Jesus who has

gathered us to be his community who naturally live out his supernatural love, because in him it is our new nature. Because in him we have the Spirit pulsating through us giving life and vitality to this new life Jesus has created; this new body Jesus has created.

This week I invite you to jot down your response to this question: 'What's your faith journey?' Or 'Describe how you are getting to know and live with Jesus.'

Without this foundation, we might do many wonderful things, but we'll never be what Jesus called 'church', his body. Without Jesus, Jesus' community just

doesn't exist. Please take the time; in conversation with the Spirit, jot down your faith story, and then invite the Spirit to lead you to someone to share your story with, and maybe hear theirs, or you might get the wonderful privilege of helping someone start their faith journey with Jesus.

So I invite you this week to grab a blank sheet of paper. To talk with the Spirit, jot down the thoughts he brings to mind about your faith journey with Jesus, then grab the first name you get and seek to share your story, listening to their life story. Let's do it!

Christ Church Lutheran

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



Jesus' disciples multiplying disciples

30 June 2019

BLANK-BLANK-BLANK?

Acts 2:42-47



Last week we began looking at what God is saying to us through our Pentecost Sunday exercise. What is God saying to us through those three wonderful blank pages; 50% of our questions.

Last week I reflected on what God could be saying to us individually. God wiping our slate clean for life with him. God wiping our slate clean so that he might write his love and affection all over our lives. God inviting us to stop and listen to him. Listen, talk, then do it.

What have you been hearing from God this week?

This week I'd like to reflect on what God might be saying to us as a community; as church.

If we were given a clean slate, what would we do as church?

My first thought was to get rid of the word 'church'. I don't know what comes to your mind when you hear the word 'church', all I know is that it doesn't translate the word Jesus used.

When you hear the word 'church' do you get the picture of a new community shaped by Jesus, growing to be his new kingdom, reflecting his very character to the world. And if that is the picture you get, is that the reality of how we live. Do we live as a tight knit community, where God's sacrificial love is lived out for all to see?

Recently I was reading a book called 'The Gathering' and in it the

author raised this question. When Jesus said to Peter; 'on this rock I will build my church' (Matt. 16;18), why do we put the emphasis on the word 'church'?

If the word 'church' suggested something new, then the obvious question from the disciples would have been; 'What's a church?'

I'm sure if nobody else, the apostle Thomas would have asked. He's the one who asks the obvious questions so we get the answer. But nobody asks; 'What's a church?' Because the word we translate 'church' simply means a gathering, an assembly, a community.

How does the text read if we use these words? Jesus said; 'I

will build MY gathering; MY assembly, MY community, on this confession – Jesus is the king, the Messiah. Now the emphasis is on Jesus; it is his gathering, his assembly, his community. And as Jesus' it reflects him, it is shaped by him; it finds its identity and value in and through Jesus.

Without Jesus what are we?

So the blank page gets me to start with Jesus; our relationship with Jesus. How Jesus is the head, and he shapes us. Jesus gives his community his identity, his purpose, his values.

The slate is wiped clean and we are left with Jesus. I can't think of a better place to start; the person Jesus. After all it is his kingdom, it is his gathering, it is his legal assembly, it is his community of people who have placed their faith in

him, relying on him to be faithful to his promises, faithful to himself.

I notice in Acts chapter two, the hallmarks of the first community reflect their relationship with Jesus. They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching – which was about

Without Jesus, what are we?

Jesus, his life, his death, his resurrection, his ascension, his promised return, how he fulfilled the promises of God. It's all about Jesus.

They devoted themselves to fellowship, and the breaking of bread; that's what we label communion. And who is at the heart of communion? Jesus. He unites us, he feeds us. It's all about Jesus.

They devoted themselves to prayer. Prayer is talking about life with who? Jesus. Prayer as we heard last week is about a conversation with Jesus; listening to him, sharing our thoughts, discussing life, then grabbing that first thought and living it out. Prayer; it's all about Jesus.

It's all about a community build on Jesus, reflecting Jesus, living with him as their king. It's

Jesus' kingdom that we are part of. It's Jesus body that we are part of. It's all about Jesus.

I wonder why for many the first thing we think about is what we call 'worship'. Do we have liturgy? Do we have songs or hymns? We talk about the building and how long we're there. We talk and talk and then we come up with the holy verses secular divide.

Early in the churches history we moved from

being persecuted to being the official religion. In that move, so I'm told, what used to be pagan cathedrals became Christian cathedrals. Does anyone spot a danger there? We moved from the home as the place of meeting and went into a pagan cathedral.

The structure for meeting started in the home; a place of intimacy, a shared meal, intimate talk, praying together, and it was replaced with a huge building. What do you do in such a building, and especially with the Emperor there? You can't just have anyone eating and talking with the Emperor.

So I'm told, the structure of the Synagogue was adopted. We move from informal to formal. Formal readings, prayers, led by a paid professional. Intimate discussion is replaced with what

eventually becomes a monologue.

So we have a pagan cathedral with a synagogue liturgy, and we called it Christian worship! Does anyone spot the seeds of a problem here? If you were to start with a blank page, is this what you'd come up with for a community

What's your faith story with Jesus?

that was to reflect Jesus, that was to live out his affectionate love in a conversational relationship?

If I was to start afresh, the place I'd go to first would be my relationship with Jesus, our relationship with Jesus, the relationship he has created through is life, death, resurrection and ascension, for us to share with him.

Commitment, Loyalty, Faithful are words that

come to mind. Words that describe the relationship Jesus has created for us to share with him twenty-four seven.

So this week I invite you to take some time and jot down how you came to faith; or how you have grown in your faith. Take some time and jot down how

you live out your relationship with Jesus; how you talk and share with him, how you seek his advice for life, how you listen, how you seek to be part of his body here on earth.

Please don't freak out, or see this as a test. It is simply an exercise to help you reflect on the relationship you share with Jesus and how that bonds you into his community.

Before you start, ask the Spirit to guide you, open your heart and mind to Jesus. Invite the Spirit to help you reflect on your relationship with Jesus, not as a test to