

Jerusalem; where the apostles weren't?

Is Jesus scattering his people again? I know you all know Jesus, know the story of his death and resurrection. I know you all have neighbours in fear, worried, uncertain. Why not invite Jesus to send the Spirit to be with you, to guide you that you are bold, that you have his words to say, that you go in his loving character. Why not invite Jesus to send the Spirit that you go and be his presence to the people he's scattered you to be near? Why not go and speak God's word in their hearing? In other words, go and offer to pray for them.

If you're not sure what to say, ask the Spirit and then say what you're given. Just like the 'Children of Israel' being lead when they didn't know where they

were going; but God did.

I invite you now to take time to pray; first take time to share with Jesus what is on your heart. Share with him the things you love.

Second, invite Jesus to share with you what's on his heart this morning. Listen, grab the first thought, share it, respond to what Jesus says; his impression, thought, feeling, image, name, desire, fear.

Thirdly ask if there is anyone who would like to be prayed for. Then ask Jesus what he has to say to them and share those first thoughts, impressions, feelings, images, names, desires, colours, smells that you get. Share with the person you are praying

for without trying to explain them; after all Jesus is talking to them not you, you don't have to understand it.

Take your time; isn't it wonderful none of us have got anything else to rush off to!!!

May Jesus send you the Spirit this week as you wonder through this wilderness with him. With him!

Let's do it.

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## Christ Church Lutheran

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



Jesus' disciples multiplying disciples

29 March 2020

## GROWING IN MY RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS—5

John 11:1-45



Has anyone heard of 'Covid-19'? Silly question; what responses have you encountered to this virus? What is your response? How do you feel about all the restrictions that we now face; like not being able to gather as a community this Sunday?

When was the last time that happened?

I invite you to share a few of your thoughts with those around you or jot them down.

Does anyone remember what happened to the early community of faith?

Let's look it up; I invite you to get out your bible and look up Acts 2.

Acts 2 is the account of the Holy Spirit coming on Jesus' disciples, and finishes with; "All the believers devoted themselves – please

note the word devoted, this wasn't some casual thing they did if they could find the time. What did they do? They 'DEVOTED' themselves.

"They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, and to fellowship, and to sharing in meals (including the Lord's Supper), and to prayer." (Acts 2:42)

The 'Covid-19' virus got me to think of this verse; it's back to basics.

I'm not sure what answer you'd give me if I asked you what is basic for a community of faith in Jesus? Here it is, it starts with a relationship marked by devotion. Devotion to Jesus, who else are the apostles teaching about. Jesus; his life, his promises, his fulfilment of God's promises, the hope he offers, the love he gives, the forgiveness

he's won, the joy of sharing life with him.

This life is lived out in fellowship, sharing a meal, including the Lord's Supper. That one could be a bit hard at the present. Though what does Jesus say in Matthew 18:20?

I invite you to look this verse up and share briefly what Jesus is saying to us today as we face the present restrictions.

Did you notice that the early community of faith celebrated the Lord's Supper with a meal and at home! I wonder what that might mean for us in these days of enforced isolation?

They were devoted to the apostle's teaching, the breaking of bread and to prayer.

Prayer, that wonderful gift of conversation with Jesus. Conversation implies a two way act. Prayer isn't a

monologue, but where we share with Jesus; share heart to heart, asking questions, thanking him, expressing our feelings, hearing Jesus' responses. Hearing Jesus responses to even the most average things, like; where are my keys? How do I fix this clothes line? What should I do with this time of isolation?

What did Jesus teach about prayer? I invite you to get out your bibles and look at Matthew 7:7-11.

The 'Covid-19' virus offers us a wonderful time to get intimate with Jesus, to spend quality time with him; listening, talking, sharing heart to heart about life, about him, about who I am in his eyes. So many other distractions have been taken away; it's back to basics.

What a wonderful opportunity; we've all got the time to be devoted to reading, reflecting, meditating, studying the bible, spending quality time with family, talking leisurely with Jesus, listening to him, living in

a wonderful intimacy with him. What an opportunity we have been given to grow in our relationship with Jesus.

The second thought that comes to my mind is the story of the 'Children of Israel', particularly when they were moving from Egypt to the 'Promised Land'.

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### My default setting is...

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The 'Children of Israel' have been in Egypt 470yrs and for much of that time they were slaves. Being a slave is what you were born into, lived in, died in, brought up the next generation in. For many years these people had been conditioned to living as slaves, they knew no other way.

All my life, and all my Christian life, I've only know one way to do things; the Lutheran way. Or at least our Australia version.

If you'd be brought up generation upon generation as a slave would you know how to live free? Would you know how to act differently? You're default setting is 'slave'.

My default setting is 'Australasian Lutheran'. That's not a bad thing at all, it just means I have only experienced a western mindset on being Jesus' disciple.

The part of the Exodus story that interests me at the present is the response of the

'Children of Israel' when they face a difficulty. There is a common refrain; (Ex 14:11,12. Ex 16:3. Ex 17:3. Ex 32:3,4. Nu 11:4-6. Nu 14:1-4.)

Did you discover a common theme?

I'm amazed that the 'Children of Israel' would ever want to go back to slavery in Egypt. But when stressed they want to go back to what they know. In some strange way the familiar; no matter how bad, was better than the unknown. They always

look to go back to what they had before.

I certainly feel God is pushing us out into the wilderness, away from all that we know and feel comfortable with. He's inviting us to follow him, to let him lead, to places we've never been.

Could that be uncomfortable? Not knowing where we are going, but simply being responsive to Jesus' lead via the Spirit.

That was the reality of the 'Children of Israel', the presence of God was visibly seen in the cloud over the Tabernacle, which at night was filled with fire. When the cloud/fire moved they moved. When it stopped they stopped.

No wonder being devoted to Jesus' word and prayer is so important. That's how he is present. No wonder the Spirit is so important; that's how he's personally present. No wonder listening in prayer is so important; I don't know what's next, Jesus does. I need to

be listening, then go for it.

In 'Covid-19' I feel God calling me, calling us to follow him into the wilderness, doing things like we've never done them before. Doing what we don't know yet.

My temptation is to want to go back to what I know; there I felt

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### Our Promised Land isn't a place, but a person.

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comfortable, but going back to Egypt was never a good idea. God was leading his people to 'HIS' Promised Land. Jesus is leading HIS people to HIS promised land; which is intimacy with him; knowing Father for who he is; knowing him in a relationship of love and affections, lived out in a conversational atmosphere where we live HIS supernatural love, naturally.

My promised land, our promised land, isn't a place, but a person. A wonderful intimate relationship with God,

person to person. I won't get there by doing what I know.

You might find this strange but God is much, much, much bigger than anything I know. If all I do is what I know, I'll totally miss the mark; won't you agree!

The third part of God's word that comes to my mind is found in Acts 8:1. I invite you to look up this text, what is it about, what detail is there? Can you see anything similar between this event and today?

I believe Jesus is impressing on me that he is doing a similar thing today. The response to the 'Covid-19' virus has forced us out of our building. This morning there is only one person left at the building; me.

Did you notice all the believers were scattered and only the apostles remained behind? Who do you think shared the Good News about Jesus to the people in those far flung regions beyond