

Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost (Ordinary 19)  
11-08-2024  
St Cuthbert's Anglican Church – Tweed Heads

2 Samuel 18:5-9,14,31-33 David's men win the battle, Joab kills Absalom

Psalms 130                      The Lord forgives those who put their hope in Him.

Ephesians 4:(17-24)25 – 5:2 Righteous behaviour is for those who follow  
Jesus, Live a life of Love.

John 6: 35, 41-51              Jesus declares himself to be the Bread of Life.  
The Jews disagree that he came from Heaven.

### Introduction

This week as we continue with chapter six of John's Gospel, we hear Jesus continuing to expand on the metaphor of how he is the "Bread of Life". As the metaphor expands Jesus is letting his followers know that he is more than just some food. Jesus is "the" food we need. Those who have Jesus, will be taught by God. Those who have Jesus, will have eternal life.

To be drawn into the life of God through Jesus was explosive for those first disciples of Jesus. For those around him, there was much to learn. Their world was being turned upside down. Those today who know and accept Jesus as the ultimate source of life, are also called to follow Jesus. Following Jesus shouldn't be a chore or burden, although it may be difficult and challenging. Following Jesus is something we should feel drawn into, in embracing the life of God in us.

Today I would like to take us through the portion of scripture we have had from Paul's letter to the Ephesians and what Paul was calling them into as followers of Jesus.

### Ephesians 4:25

<sup>25</sup>So then, putting away falsehood, let all of us speak the truth to our neighbours, for we are members of one another.

As followers of Jesus we are called to tell the truth. This seems like a pretty unremarkable thing to say, but it is amazing how often we are dishonest with others, and even dishonest with ourselves.

Recently, I saw on a motivational calendar, a saying which went like this:

If I only had three words of advice, they would be, “Tell the Truth”. If I had three more words, I’d add, “All the Time”.

Clearly as human beings, at times, we have a problem with being honest. As Christians we are called to be honest, but that does not mean we are allowed to be rude or abusive to people. We are called to speak the truth in love.

### Ephesians 4:26-27

<sup>26</sup>Be angry but do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, <sup>27</sup>and do not make room for the devil.

Some people think it is not good to be angry. But, of course, it is normal to get angry. Jesus himself got angry. We are told here, “be angry, but do not sin”. It’s what we do with our anger that is important. We need to channel our anger into positive ways of dealing with issues.

I recall my grandmother giving me some very sound advice once about not going to sleep if you’ve had an argument with your wife, and the argument hasn’t been resolved. Of course, there will be times when an issue may not be able to be resolved in only one day, but we should at least try to acknowledge the issue, and not let it fester. I’ve heard this bit of common wisdom again since then, but I wonder how many realize that it comes straight from the bible.

So, we need to deal with our anger in positive ways. If we dwell on anger in a negative way, it can be bad for us. Verse 27 reminds us not to make room for the devil.

### Ephesians 4:28

<sup>28</sup>Thieves must give up stealing; rather let them labor and work honestly with their own hands, so as to have something to share with the needy.

In this we hear we are called to Honest Work. We know we are not to steal. It’s number eight in the ten commandments. But not only are we not to steal, we are called to work honestly for our living. Working is part of what it is to be human, it is often seen as a curse, but as Christians, honest work is a good thing. Honest work is the way we provide for our needs and the needs of our families.

Also, in the reward we receive from honest work, we are called to be generous to those who are needy. Just as God blesses us with the ability to work, God calls us to share from what we have earned for the good of others.

### Ephesians 4:29-30

<sup>29</sup>Let no evil talk come out of your mouths, but only what is useful for building up, as there is need, so that your words may give grace to those who hear. <sup>30</sup>And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with which you were marked with a seal for the day of redemption.

In the bible we hear a lot about the words we speak. We hear how words have power. We hear how words can have great influence. A big challenge for us in this piece of scripture is that the only words that should come out of our mouths, are words for building others up. No gossip, no slander, imagine how different the world would be if we could all achieve this. It's normal for me to whinge about people I'm upset with. Paul says to the Ephesians, "Let no evil talk come out of your mouths". I believe this is a big challenge for us in our lives. Some people are better than others at holding their tongue, but I believe we all need to continually be on guard about what we say, because once we say something, we can never unsay it.

### Ephesians 4:31-32

<sup>31</sup>Put away from you all bitterness and wrath and anger and wrangling and slander, together with all malice, <sup>32</sup>and be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ has forgiven you.

Forgiveness is another aspect of our Christian lives that is very well known. Each time we pray the Lord's Prayer we pray, "Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us." It is of course a very easy thing to say, but sometimes forgiving others can be the hardest thing we have to do.

As Christians though, we can be empowered to forgive, because we know that we have been forgiven in Jesus.

### Ephesians 5:1-2

<sup>1</sup>Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children, <sup>2</sup>and live in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

As Christians we are called to be imitators of God, and the way we know God is through Jesus. So, in our lives we are called to imitate what Jesus did. We can't imitate Jesus, unless we really get to know Jesus. That's why continuing to read our bibles and be immersed in the scriptures is important. That's why worshipping together and hearing about Jesus is important. That's why spending time in prayer and communicating with God is important. The closer we get to knowing God in Jesus, then the more likely it is we will be enabled to imitate God.

## Conclusion

Wow, we've only looked at Paul's letter to the Ephesians today, however there is so much more detail we could have delved into on each verse.

We have continued to learn more about Jesus as the "Bread of Life". And as we do this, we have also looked at how it will impact our lives, and how we are called to live our lives.

How wonderful would it be if we could all live like this all of the time.

Knowing God through Jesus is the most wonderful thing that we can do with our lives. I believe the joy of knowing Jesus is beyond anything else we can experience.

We also know though, that living Godly lives will cost us. I felt challenged as I really reflected on the reading from Paul's letter to the Ephesians in preparing this talk today.

Living Godly lives will not always be easy, but it will always be more than worth it. Amen.