



# MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Following Your Passion  
and Finding Your  
Place to Serve

A West View Devotional Guide based on the book by James A. Harnish



Ash Wednesday

Wednesday 14 February

Week 1

**AWAKENING**

Sermon

Daily Devotions

Sunday 18 February

Page | 5

Week 2

**WHO ARE THESE PEOPLE?**

Sermon

Daily Devotions

Sunday 25 February

Page | 15

Week 3

**CHILDREN, GO WHERE I SEND YOU**

Sermon

Daily Devotions

Sunday 04 March

Page | 23

Week 4

**GO TOGETHER**

Sermon

Daily Devotions

Sunday 11 March

Page | 35

Week 5

**INTO THE CRUCIBLE OF PAIN AND HOPE**

Sermon

Daily Devotions

Sunday 18 March

Page | 43

Week 6

**FROM HERE TO KINGDOM COME**

Sermon

Daily Devotions

Sunday 25 March

Page | 53

Week 1  
**AWAKENING**

**MONDAY – Tuning in**

**Ephesians 5:14 (CEB)** *“Wake up, sleeper! Get up from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.”*

The humble FM radio is fast losing relevance, but the subtle art of “tuning in” has something to teach us. Perhaps you still have an old FM radio at home, one with a dial that you need to turn just right to tune into your preferred station. Sometimes you need to adjust the aerial or move around the house to get a better signal. You might have even used the trick of holding the aerial so your whole body becomes the antennae!

In the prologue to John’s vision as described in Revelations, he states that he was “in the Spirit” (Rev 1:10, NIV). John was tuned into God’s frequency, he was receptive to God’s voice, he was awakened to the vision that God was about to share with him. He was in a position to hear God’s revelation, as if he himself was the antennae.

Most of us are unlikely to receive a vision from God as dramatic and visual as the one described in Revelations. But there is a purpose, a vision for our lives that God desires to share with each of us. As James Harnish puts it:

*“God calls ordinary people like every one of us to be the people through whom God’s kingdom comes and God’s will gets done on this earth, even as it is already fulfilled in heaven.”* (p.17)

If we are to awaken to God’s call, we need to be honest about our present reality. Are we living in tune with God’s kingdom, or are we only hearing static? Are our hearts open to God’s truths or are our lives so full of noise that we don’t hear His still small voice speaking to us, challenging us? When God speaks (and he does, all the time, all around us), do we hear His voice on the surface or do we listen in the depths? And is it possible that God might utilise us to bring awakening to our brothers and sisters in Christ?

This week we will explore these questions together. We will try to hear God’s still small voice speaking into our hearts, awakening us to a purpose that he is calling us to. Awakening *you* to how *you* can make a difference.

- Are you tuned in?

**Prayer:** Lord help me to listen to you. Help me to hear your voice. Show me what it means to tune into your Kingdom and my place in it. **Amen**

## TUESDAY – Short-wave truths

**Isaiah 60:1 & 2 (CEB)** *“Arise! Shine! Your light has come; the Lord’s glory has shone upon you. Though darkness covers the earth and gloom the nations, the Lord will shine upon you; God’s glory will appear over you.”*

Before there was FM radio, there was short wave radio. Some might say there was an art in tuning into a short-wave station. Perhaps you remember the excitement of tuning into a radio station from another country! Many South Africans would use short wave radios to tune into the BBC World Service during the apartheid years. While the apartheid government controlled the local airwaves for their propaganda, they couldn’t prevent truth filtering into the homes on the high frequencies of short wave.

It is not always easy to tell truth from falsehood in our world. There are many voices out there telling us who we should be and what we should believe. But the truth of God’s will for our lives is usually missing in this messaging. James Harnish explains that *“we become so comfortable with the way life is that we miss out on what it can become.”* (p.21)

Scripture is a lot like short-wave radio. It cuts into our world with truths from afar. At first it can be difficult to understand and relate to. But by allowing it to be a part of our lives we provide an avenue which God can use to speak into our hearts. The messages are often challenging, counter-cultural and counter-intuitive. They have a way of weaving through our modern world and revealing God’s presence all around us. They tell us of God’s story, a story of love and disappointment, of failure and reconciliation, of grace, hope and liberation. They express God’s desire to bring all of creation back in tune with his Kingdom. And you are God’s creation.

- Which voices are most influential in your life? Do you believe that God can use the Bible to speak truth into your life? Are you being intentional about studying and understanding his Word?

**Prayer:** Thank you God that you still speak truth into our lives today through your Bible. Help me to be disciplined in my study and to dig deep to discover the truths that you want me to understand. **Amen.**

## WEDNESDAY – Blocking Out Interference

**Matthew 13: 13 (NIV)** *“Though seeing, they do not see; though hearing, they do not understand”*

Listening to short-wave radio has become almost impossible in our modern world. Computers and WiFi routers and microwave ovens and even LED light bulbs all conspire to interfere with short-wave frequencies making it nearly impossible to tune in. Our modern world is so busy and noisy and gaudy that many people simply can't wait to escape for a holiday or a weekend in the mountains or the farm or the game reserve. To escape to a place with no electricity, no traffic and \*gasp\* no cell phone signal.

Unfortunately, many of us who live and work in Gauteng end up joining the holiday migration to Durban or Cape Town or 'Plett' where the busyness gets packed in with our swimming costumes. Those who can afford to, choose cities like New York or London or Dubai where there are more shops, more traffic and, yes, less chance of catching short-wave signals.

Our modern lifestyle makes it hard to stop and notice the burning bushes all around us people, signs, experiences, nature, all proclaiming God's kingdom and trying to get through the noise and into our hearts. It is probably not realistic to completely disconnect from our connected world. But it is possible to be mindful of God's unfolding kingdom all around us. Whispering. Calling. Awakening.

When Jesus taught in parables, he was aware that not all who heard his kingdom stories truly understood them. The message of the kingdom only takes hold in hearts that are fertile. Hearts which are receptive. But when our hearts are full of things that are not of the Kingdom, things like guilt, anger, greed and jealousy (see *“Enemies of the heart”* by Andy Stanley) we find that our hearts are like rocky or thorny paths where the seeds of God's Kingdom cannot grow. The truths of the short-waves simply can't get passed all the interference.

- What is preventing your heart from hearing God's calling? What is interfering with God's kingdom message? Is it the busyness and noise of life? Is your heart broken by feelings of guilt or of anger or of greed or of jealousy?
- What do you need to let go of to hear God's call?

**Prayer:** God I want to hear your voice. I want to hear your call. Help me to know how to clear out the interference that prevents me from seeing and understanding your kingdom. **Amen.**

## THURSDAY – From listening to understanding to change

**Revelation 3: 2 & 3 (CEB)** *“Wake up and strengthen whatever you have left, teetering on the brink of death, for I’ve found that your works are far from complete in the eyes of my God. So remember what you have seen and heard. Hold on to it, and change your hearts and lives”.*

Have you ever caught yourself “listening” to the news on the radio – perhaps in the car, perhaps at home – only to realise at the end of the bulletin that you don’t remember anything that was said! Maybe you were waiting to hear the latest Rand/Dollar exchange rate or the level of the JSE All Share index but when the news reader got there your mind was elsewhere.

Perhaps church has become that way. You come every Sunday out of discipline or habit. You come because you think you might hear God’s voice. But when you leave you find yourself unmoved. And by Monday morning you have no recollection of the songs you sang or the message that was preached or the opportunities to serve that were shared in the West View News!

In Revelations 3, we encounter God’s challenge to the church in Sardis. He accuses them of having a reputation of being alive, but in fact being dead. Perhaps this church thought that they were “doing” the right things, but in fact their hearts remained unmoved, unchanged. You might be feeling resistant to what God has been speaking to you this week. Or you might feel like you are a “good enough Christian”. God’s kingdom is never just about being “good enough”. It is about being a part of bringing the love and hope and joy and liberation that God promises into the world today. It is about being changed people, and people who change the world.

- Are you hearing God calling you to a deeper place, to a purposeful life?
- Are you listening? Are you understanding? Are you allowing your heart to be changed?

**Prayer:** God take me deeper. I am hearing you. Help me listen, help me understand, and help me change. Change me for a life of purpose in your kingdom. **Amen**

## FRIDAY – Directing the Stream

**Acts 1: 8 (NIV)** “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

The FM radio has been replaced by the digital world with its on-demand streaming. Knowledge is just a Google search away. Podcasts are available on any topic you can imagine, Facebook and Twitter feeds provide an infinite flow of “important” information. News apps alert you the moment something significant (or insignificant!) happens in the world. You don’t need to pay attention, you just need to plug into the endless stream of digital data and see where it takes you.

You can choose to be intentional and filter the stream so that it is value adding and life giving. The digital world also provides an opportunity for Christ-followers to be a part of adding to the stream in a way that points others to the Kingdom.

Before Jesus ascended into heaven, he commissioned His disciples to go and make disciples of all nations. In the Acts account of this moment, Jesus promised the disciples that He was sending His Spirit to empower them for this work. He calls them to be witnesses. He calls them to action.

A beautiful part of tuning into the kingdom is that we do not only get to hear God’s voice through the witness of those around us, but we get to be God’s voice to witness to those around us. As James Harnish puts it:

*“...being a disciple is not simply about my life being shaped into the image of Christ; it is about the way God can use my life as a living witness to the kingdom of God, present though not yet fulfilled among us.” (p. 29-30)*

Witnessing is not simply about talking about Jesus. It is about being Jesus to the world. It is about bringing his love and hope and grace and liberation to those who need it most. Over the coming weeks you will get to explore what this will mean for you. You will discover how you can make a difference, how you can be Christ’s witness to the world, how you can bring God’s kingdom to the earth.

- What is that you need to fill your life with to better prepare you to hear God’s promptings?
- Is God prompting you right now to be his witness to someone?

**Prayer:** God I want to be your witness. I want to know what this means. Help me to hear your voice above all the noise. Help my life to be more than just a stream of meaningless social media posts. Help me to tune my online and offline life to your kingdom. Help me to know what to do. **Amen**

### **Taking action**

Has God already started prompting your heart as to how He might be calling you to make a difference? Take time to write it down now. Then share it with a close friend or family member. Ask them to pray for you as you continue this journey.

If you have not heard God's voice, do not despair. Ask a close friend or family member, someone who knows you well, to describe how they think God might use you to make a difference in the world. Write down what they say!

### **SATURDAY REFLECTION: Your awakening**

I slip into sleep,  
a deadness I seek,  
a trance of avoidance,  
distraction's pleasant coma.  
I am numb to your world, O Christ,  
to your suffering, your love,  
unconscious of you here.

Awaken me.  
Breathe yourself into me  
and rouse me  
from my fearful distance.  
Let even pain keep me awake,  
attentive to your pain  
in all who hurt,  
your love keep me alert  
to love in all your forms

Grant me this simple gift,  
all you ask:  
that I may stay awake,  
trusting I am not orphaned,  
and pray with you,  
so earnestly praying for me  
and all the world.

Just stay awake my little time  
and pray with you.

Let all my waking hours  
be wakeful hours

- Steve Garnaas-Holmes  
(as quoted in "Make a  
difference" by James  
Harnis

Spend time reflecting on the words of this prayer. Can it become your prayer? What is God awakening you to?

## WHO ARE THESE PEOPLE?

### MONDAY – Happy People

**Proverbs 31:13 – 20, 25 (NLT).** *“She finds wool and flax and busily spins it. She is like a merchant’s ship bringing food from afar. She gets up before dawn to produce breakfast for her household and plan the day’s work for her household and plan the day’s work for her servant girls. She goes and inspects a field and buys it; with her earning she plants a vineyard. She is energetic and strong, a hard worker. She makes sure her dealings are profitable; her lamp burns late into the night. Her hands are busy spinning thread, her fingers twisting fiber. She extends a helping hand to the poor and opens her arms to the needy. <sup>25</sup>She is clothed with strength and dignity, and she laughs without fear of the future.”*

Dr. Albert Schweitzer defined the key to a happy life as follows:

*“I don’t know what your destiny will be, but one thing I know: the only ones among you who will be really happy are those who have sought and found how to serve.”*

Did the highly honoured theologian, musician, and physician get it right? Are there any other or better ways to find happiness today?

In our reading today, Solomon describes a wife of noble character. She is described as a woman who is doing exceptionally well as a partner, a housewife, a parent, employer, investor, a manager, a caregiver and serves everyone in her care. All this caring and service and then in verse 25 we read that she does everything with a smile.

It appears to me that the good doctor and Solomon are in agreement that being an active servant is the way to a happy life.

- Do you agree with Dr. Albert Schweitzer or not? What makes you really happy?
- Are the only people who are really happy those who have found a way to serve? Why?

**Prayer:** Lord, let me be a channel of your blessings to others. I do not know how you will use my prayers, but I trust you absolutely, that I may play my part in your healing and redeeming work in the world. **Amen.**

## TUESDAY – Look for Difference-Making People

**Genesis 24: 1 – 4 (NLT).** *“Abraham was now a very old man, and the Lord had blessed him in every way. One day Abraham said to his oldest servant, the man in charge of his household, “Take an oath by putting your hand under my thigh. Swear by the Lord, the God of heaven and earth, that you will not allow my son to marry one of these local Canaanite women. Go instead to my homeland, to my relatives, and find a wife there for my son Isaac.”*

People who make a difference to others through their serving are not difficult to find. Some even become role models for others and are recognizable as dependable people making a difference to God’s Kingdom. You find them in church sometimes being very visible and at other times almost unnoticed. Working, serving and seeing to it that everything is ready for others to worship the Lord. You find them in places such as care centers, educational institutions, medical institutions, disaster- and poor areas.

Abraham had to rely on his trusted servant to find a wife for his son. He had to rely on this seasoned servant to help him to secure the future of his “kingdom.” He needed a person who was used to giving dedicated and selfless service. God establishes His Kingdom with these kinds of people.

- Can you think of anyone you know whom you would trust enough to secure you and your family’s future?
- Do you think you could be a candidate to serve someone with such an important and personal need?

**Prayer:** Lord, help me to make a difference in the life of all those who I may meet today by being loving, kind and friendly. Holy Spirit help me to recognize opportunities to do so. **Amen**

## WEDNESDAY - Stay Connected to The Power Source

**Genesis 24: 12 – 15 (NLT).** *“O Lord, God of my master Abraham,” he prayed. “Please give me success today, and show unfailing love to my master, Abraham. See, I am standing here beside this spring, and young women of the town are coming out to draw water. This is my request, I will ask one of them, ‘Please give me a drink from your jug.’ If she says, ‘Yes, have a drink, and I will water your camels too!’ – let her be the one you have selected as Isaac’s wife. This is how I will know that you have shown unfailing love to my master.” Before he had finished praying, he saw a young woman named Rebekah coming out with her water jug on her shoulder.*

The passion of people who make a Kingdom-shaped difference does not drop in out of thin air. Dedicated and successful servants do not function on their own strengths. In all successful cases of making a difference in people's lives it is a result of who they are and the way they remain connected to Christ.

The conduct of Abraham's servant, Eliezer, is a fine example of staying connected to the power source. He had learned much about faith and about God from his master. He asked God for guidance in this very important task. The hospitality of the day required women at the well to offer water to weary travellers, but not their animals. Eliezer asked God to show him a person with an attitude of service – someone who would go beyond the expected.

- What are your family members, friends and associates learning about God from watching you?
- Do you have a servant spirit?

**Prayer:** Precious Lord. Thank you that I can pray for your guidance and help whenever I find the need to do so. Thank you that I can read the Word without fear of persecution. Thank you that I can worship you whenever I want to. Please help me to do so more often. Bless those who do not have this freedom granted to them. **Amen**

## **THURSDAY – Listen for Your Name**

**1 Samuel 3: 8 – 11 (NLT).** *“ So the Lord called a third time, and once more Samuel got up and went to Eli. “Here I am. Did you call me?” Then Eli realised it was the Lord who was calling the boy. So he said to Samuel, “Go and lie down again, and if someone calls again, say, ‘Speak, Lord, your servant is listening.’ So Samuel went back to bed. And the Lord came and called as before, “Samuel! Samuel!” And Samuel replied, “Speak, your servant is listening.” Then the Lord said to Samuel, “I am about to do a shocking thing in Israel.”*

Samuel was sleeping in the temple serving God and learning about God daily. All these practices prepared him for what was to come – to hear God's voice calling his name. In Revelation 1: 9 – 11 we read how John, whilst worshipping in the Spirit, heard a loud voice like a trumpet blast – the start of the book Revelation.

Both of them were busy serving God and His people at the time they received God's message. God's call usually comes to people who regularly practice spiritual disciplines. Spend some time praying to God as often as you can. Read the bible and books that the Spirit guides you to or your Christian friends recommend to you. Surround yourself with people serving God at services, home groups, church functions and social events. During these events as well as your quiet times in prayer and meditative worship, listen for your name.

- Do you allow enough time to spend adequate quiet time to be able to listen for a call from the Lord?
- Do you create opportunities for your partner and/or children to spend enough time to study the bible and to pray?

**Prayer:**

Abba, Father,  
I am here, for you,  
for myself, for the world,  
for this moment,  
I am here.....**Amen.**

**FRIDAY: – Hear and Respond**

**Luke 1: 28 – 31,34,38 (NLT).** <sup>28</sup>*“Gabriel appeared to her and said, “Greetings, favoured woman! The Lord is with you!” Confused and disturbed, Mary tried to think what the angel could mean. ” Don’t be afraid, Mary,” the angel told her, “for you have found favour with God! You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you will name him Jesus.”*

<sup>34</sup>*Mary asked the angel, “But how can this happen? I am a virgin.”*

<sup>38</sup>*Mary responded, “I am the Lord’s servant. May everything you have said about me come true.” And then the angel left her.*

Mary was young, poor, female – all characteristics that, to the people of her day, would make her seem unusable by God for any major task. But God chose Mary for one of the most important acts of obedience He has ever demanded of anyone. God's announcement of the birth of a special child made Sarah, Abraham's wife, laugh (Genesis 18: 9 – 15). Zechariah doubted (Luke 1: 18). By contrast Mary graciously submitted. She believed the angel's words and agreed to bear the child, even under humanly impossible circumstances and made a difference to the whole creation.

You may feel that your ability, experience, or education makes you an unlikely candidate for God's service. He can use you if you trust Him. God is able to do

the impossible. Our response to God's demands to make a difference should be willing acceptance to do so.

- Are you experiencing the inner joy that comes to any follower of Christ who follows his or her passion and finds a place to serve?
- Are you leading an unhappy life at the moment? If so, is there not some ministry at church that might fit your passion? You might find inner joy!

**Prayer:** Master, speak, thy servant heareth, waiting for thy gracious word, longing for thy voice that cheereth; Master, let it now be heard. I am list'ning, Lord, for thee; What has thou to say to me? **Amen.**

### **Challenge**

Identify one individual whom you think is a difference-making person serving his family, community, church, organization or even the world.

Once you have identified her/him, acknowledge them by either sending them an email, letter, or message and tell the person what she/he means to you. Even go a step further and invite the person for coffee or a meal. It is your turn to make a difference!!

### **SATURDAY - Prayer**

Christ, let me see you in others.

Christ, let others see you in me.

Christ, let me see:

You are the caller

You are the poor

You are the stranger at my door.

You are the wanderer

The unfed

You are the homeless

With no bed.

You are the man

Driven insane

You are the child

Crying in pain.

You are the other who comes to me

Open my eyes that I may see. Amen.

*David Adam*

*The Book of a Thousand Prayers – Angela Ashwin*

Week 3  
**CHILDREN, GO WHERE I SEND YOU**

**MONDAY – Jesus Sends Out The Twelve**

**Luke 9: 1 – 5** *When Jesus had called the twelve together, he gave them power and authority to drive out all demons and to cure diseases, and he sent them out to preach the kingdom of God and to heal the sick. Whatever house you enter, stay there until you leave that town. If people do not welcome you, shake the dust off your feet when you leave their town, as a testimony against them.*

The mission of The Methodist Church announces that we do not “make disciples” for the sake of our own spiritual well-being, but “for the transformation of the world.

The practical or biblical understanding of discipleship is that the Christian life is not primarily defined by sitting in a pew on Sunday but by the way we live and serve beyond the church walls during the week. We must live out our discipleship in the world rather inside the church. What we do inside the church is intended to equip us to be the agents of God’s love, grace justice and peace on the outside.

Jesus did not invite people to come into the synagogue to be healed. He sent his disciples into the communities around them to heal, teach, cast out demons and announce the presence of the kingdom of God.

One pastor described this truth by building a sermon around the difference between spinning on a stationary bicycle and biking on the open road. Both provide exercise, but one of them doesn’t get you anywhere. That is why it’s called spinning.

Biking gets us out into the open, where we confront the challenge of whatever the natural elements throw at us. Incarnation means not only that God came among us in Jesus but also that God intends to go into the world in the lives of people like every one of us. “STOP, LOOK, LISTEN”

Those three imperatives are good advices as we seek to find the place where we are called to serve. They also describe the way Moses experienced God’s call.

**Exodus 3: 3 – 10** *Moses was tending Jethro's flock when he stopped at Mount Horeb. That is where Moses looked at the burning bush. He listen and heard God say, "I have clearly seen my people oppressed in Egypt. I have heard their cry of injustice because of their slave masters. I know about their pain Then Moses heard the Lord say, So get going. I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people out of Egypt."*

Responding to that call, Moses became the agent of God's liberating power in the lives of his people. Like Moses, we can discern where God is calling us to serve when we intentionally stop, look and listen.

- Have you seen any burning bushes lately?
- What does it mean for me to stop, look and listen for God's call?
- What action is God calling you to take in response?
- Am I finding the place where the Lord is sending me?
- Have you found a community of disciples to guide and support?
- What does Jesus statement "Let the children come unto me" mean to you?

**Prayer:** Lord, teach us that our salvation lies within you and that my future is in your hands. May that knowledge be my joy, my serenity, my redemption and hope?

Lord thank you, you are the unfailing provider. Thank you that you know everything and that you care. Grant that this conviction may be my strength and inspiration every day of my life. Grant me Lord your peace, particularly during the stormy times in life.

## **Tuesday – The Transfiguration**

**Mark 9: 2 – 7** *After six days Jesus took Peter, James and John with him and led them up a high mountain, where they were all alone. There he was transfigured before them. His clothes became dazzling white. And there appeared before them Elijah and Moses, who were talking to Jesus. Peter said to Jesus, Rabbi it is good for us to be here. Let us put up shelters, one for you one for Moses and one for Elijah. (He did not know what to say, they were so frightened). Then a cloud appeared and enveloped them, and a voice came from the cloud: This is my son whom I love. Listen to him.*

They immediately came down from that spiritual high and were drawn into the needs of the messy, hurting, confused crowd that gathered at the foot of the mountain.

*Jesus said to them, "I tell you the truth, there are some standing here now who won't experience death until they see God's kingdom real manifest with power. When they came down the mountain to the other nine disciples, they noticed a crowd around them who brought a child that was possessed by Demons and were unable to cast them out. Jesus casted the demons out of the child and they were amazed. Jesus said to them "The son of man is destined to be betrayed and turned over to those who will execute him. But after three days he will rise again." (Luke 9)*

This manifestation of the power of God's kingdom realm could be seen in three dimensions: 1) Jesus' transfiguration and the appearance of Moses and Elijah on the mountain. 2) Jesus' resurrection and ascension into glory 3) The coming of the holy spirit at Pentecost.

To come down from the spiritual high into a messy, hurting and confused crowd that has gathered at the foot of the mountain and to go where God sends us, 1) is to go to places like the Samaritan woman at the well. A member of the hated mixed race. 2) Was known to be living in sin, and 3) was in public place.

No respectable Jewish man would like to talk to a woman under such circumstances. But Jesus did. The Good News is for every person, no matter what his or her race, social position, or past sins.

We must be prepared to share this Good News at any time and in any place.

Jesus crossed all barriers to share the Good News. We that follow him must do no less.

- Am I finding the place where the Lord is sending me?
- Have you found a community of disciples to guide and support?
- What does Jesus statement "Let the children come unto me" mean to you?

**PRAYER:** Heavenly father, grant us the grace to look away from ourselves and to see Christ and the needs of others. Grant us the grace to share our love so liberally that Jesus will be revealed through our lives. Heavenly father, so often we do not have the strength to fight life's battles, but we thank you that through your grace we will be triumphant in life; particularly over sin and failures.

## **WEDNESDAY – Jesus Washes His Disciples Feet.**

**John 13; 14 & 15** *Now that I, your lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you.*

**Question:** What was the significance of Jesus washing the feet of the disciples?

**Answer:** Jesus washing the feet of the disciples occurred in the upper room, just prior to the last supper and has significance in three ways: For Jesus, it was the display of His humility and His servanthood; For the disciples, the washing of their feet was in direct contrast to their heart attitudes at that time; For us, washing feet is symbolic of our role in the body of Christ.

Walking in sandals on the filthy roads of Palestine in the first century made it imperative that feet be washed before a communal meal, especially because people reclined at a low table and feet were very much evidence. When Jesus rose from the table and began to wash the feet of the disciples, He was doing the work of the lowest servants. The disciples must have been stunned at this act of humility and condescension, that Christ, their Lord and master, should wash the feet of His disciples, when it was their proper work to have washed His.

But when Jesus came to the earth the first time, He came not as King and conqueror, but as the Suffering servant of Isaiah 53. As He said in Matthew 20:28, He came “not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

The humility expressed by His act with a towel and the basin foreshadowed His Ultimate act of humility and the cross.

Jesus' attitude of servanthood was in direct contrast to that of the disciples, who had been recently arguing among themselves as to which of them is the greatest (Luke 22:24).

Since there was no servant present to wash their feet, it would never have occurred to them to wash one another's feet.

When the Lord Himself stooped to this lowly task, they were stunned into silence. To his credit Peter protested, “you shall never wash my feet”.

Then Jesus said something that must have further shocked Peter: “Unless I wash you, you have no part with me,” prompting Peter, whose love for the saviour was genuine, to request a complete washing. Then Jesus explained the true meaning of being washed by Him.

Peter had experienced the cleansing of salvation and did not need to be washed again in the spiritual sense. Salvation is a one-time act of justification by faith, but the lifelong process of sanctification is one of washing from the stain of sin we experience as we walk through the world.

- Do I still want to go where God want to sends me?
- What are your stumbling blocks, in take up your cross and follow Jesus?

**Prayer:** Heavenly father, keep me from blundering blindly on paths where I think I should be. In your grace let me live as close to you as possible, to enable me to understand your will for my life. God of grace and love, thank you for sending Jesus Christ to demonstrate your love for us. Let His perfect love saturate, purify and strengthen my life.

## **THURSDAY – The Empty Tomb**

**Mark 16: 6 & 7 The resurrection.** *“Don’t be alarmed,” he said, “You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene” who was crucified, He has risen! He is not here, See the place where they laid him. But go, tell his disciples and Peter, He is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you.*

The risen Christ who promised the first disciples that they would find him in Galilee calls us out of the church and into the world. By the power of the spirit, we are sent as the agents of his healing, forgiveness, justice and peace in the community beyond the church walls.

It’s the visual expression of the way our experience in worship empowers us to make a transformative difference outside the church walls. We are sent from worship to the people through whom God answers our prayer for God’s kingdom to come and God’s will be done in our world. When we see the suffering and the injustice of the world and ask, “God, why don’t you do something about this? We probably hear God asking the same question of us. God is already out there, and we are challenged to join him in the kingdom work of healing, peace and redemption.

Our life of discipleship is in the church but it is completed in the world. Charles Wesley called the Holy Spirit we experience in worship the “sacred energy” that sends us into a place where we live and work the rest of the week. In the same upper room where the risen Christ “breathed on them and said, “Receive the Holy Spirit”, he also said, “As the Father sent me, so I am sending you” John 20:21.

The angelic command at the empty tomb was not “Stay here and worship” but “Go, tell his disciples.

Jesus’ final commission to his disciples was not to come and sit in your pews, but Go make disciples of all nations, baptize them in the name of the father and the son and the Holy Spirit. (Matthew 28:19)

- Are you finding a place where the Lord is sending you?
- Am I open to the unexpected ways in which God might open my eyes to a specific need?

**Prayer:** Heavenly Father, I believe in you and put all my trust in you. Reveal yourself to me in the midst of this storm through Christ, my redeemer. Father, you know how easily my mind begins to wander when I try to pray. I pray that your Holy Spirit will focus my mind, so that I may be blessed in my prayer life, as you had intended me to be.

## **FRIDAY – At the Ascension and Pentecost**

**Acts 1: 1 – 8** ...<sup>3</sup>After his suffering, he showed himself to these men and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive .<sup>4</sup>Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my father promised, which you have heard me speak about....

<sup>8</sup>But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to all ends of the earth.

The disciples realised that they would lose Jesus and were sad about it. That is why Jesus comforted them by giving them the promise that he would be leaving them for their own good, because when he left, he would send the Holy Spirit, the counsellor, to them.

To be present in physical form held limitations for Christ. However, nothing can restrict the Holy Spirit. Wherever we are, he will be with us. Throughout the world the Spirit works in people's hearts. Through the Holy Spirit we can maintain an unbroken relationship with our Redeemer. Through the Holy Spirit, the word of God will speak to people's hearts and bring them to repentance. (Acts 2:37)

The Holy Spirit also brings the conviction that a just God will judge us, but also that through his death on the cross we are no longer under the law but can share in his grace.

"Paraclete" means "someone who is called upon to witness in our favour" How comforting to know that the Holy Spirit will always be our advocate and plead for us whenever Satan, our conscience, our fellow man accuse us before God.

The paraclete can be called upon in times of distress and grief, when in doubt the word of God or are confused. Whenever you feel overcome by the mystery of suffering. Remember that there is a Counsellor who pleads for you before the Throne of mercy.

In times of danger the paraclete will intervene for us. He will be the railing that protects us from falling into the abyss. He keeps us from stumbling, and this encourages us to proceed fearlessly, even when the light grows dim. He always intercedes when we fall short and enables us to face life's problems.

- What is the significance of Ascension and its purpose for you?
- Will you still take the challenge to go where God is calling you to go and serve?

**Prayer:** Spirit of God, you are the Paraclete who guides us. You are the source of life, a gift from God who stays with us and kindles in our hearts the fire of your glowing love.

Grant that we may also live for you – Immanuel, God with us.

### **Taking action**

Evaluate your priorities, identifying any areas where you need to make changes in order to address competing demands and make space for spiritual disciplines and service. Make notes in this book or a journal about anything you need to say NO to, let go of, or take off your plate.

## **SATURDAY**

Now the twelve, the foundation of the future community, are being sent out to do exactly the same work that Jesus has been doing.

They are instructed to travel lightly, bringing only what they absolutely need.

No food or money or even a change of clothes. They will not need these things because they will be taken care of by the people they serve.

Overall, they are to show total dependence on and trust God.

The disciples went off and did the three-central works of Jesus: healing the sick; casting out evil spirits and proclaiming the Good News of salvation. They not only preached the kingdom; they made it a reality in people's lives.

This is what we too are all called to do within the circumstances of our lives.

Having little but giving much.

However victory is assured if we only humble ourselves before God and trust in his power and authority. Humility is the key to this spiritual battle. It's the key to overcoming the attacks and temptations of the evil one. So, humble yourself before God when you feel oppressed or tempted. Acknowledge that only God has the authority to strengthen you.

Put your trust in him. He will not let you down!

**Happy Saturday!**

Week 4  
**GO TOGETHER**

**MONDAY: Don't Try It Alone**

*"If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together"* African proverb on the wall of the arrival gates of OR Tambo International Airport, Johannesburg.

**Hebrews 10: 23 – 25 (NIV)** *"<sup>24</sup>And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds."*

**Luke 10: 1 – 3 (NIV)** *"After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them two by two ahead of him to every town and place where he was about to go. He told them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field. Go! I am sending you out like lambs among wolves."*

In his book *"Make a Difference"* James Harnish reminds us that fulfilling our mission of making disciples "for the transformation of the world" has turned out to be more complicated than we imagined.

Jesus understood this and so he sent the disciples out in pairs because he knew that they would be stronger together. We need the support of others as we live out our lives in circumstances which are often challenging. Our support and strength is most often found in Home Groups, other small groups and in those who share our passion to make a difference in our world. Each of us needs someone to share the journey, someone to encourage us when times are tough and someone who will share our joys and victories.

- What area of life and ministry do you feel passionate about?
- Do you have someone to share ministry with? Is someone praying for you?

**Prayer:** Lord Jesus, thank you that we are never truly alone because you are always present to encourage and strengthen us. Help us in turn to encourage one another as we strive to live as kingdom people. **Amen**

**TUESDAY – Do the good stuff**

**Acts 2: 42 – 47 The Message** *"They committed themselves to the teaching of the apostles, the life together, the common meal, and the prayers. Everyone around was in awe - all those wonders and signs done through the apostles! And all the believers lived in a wonderful harmony, holding everything in common. They sold whatever they owned and pooled their resources so that each person's need*

*was met. They followed a daily discipline of worship in the Temple followed by meals at home, every meal a celebration, exuberant and joyful, as they praised God. People in general liked what they saw. Every day their number grew as God added those who were saved.”*

We are called to be a living expression of God’s kingdom and as such we have a common mission to unite us. The early church practised an ‘uncommon generosity’, not only in the sharing of their possessions but in their love for one another. John 13: 34 & 35 Jesus says, “*A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.*”

John Wesley expressed it like this “Though we cannot think alike, may we not love alike? May we not be of one heart, though we are not of one opinion? Jesus calls us to live in such a way that people who have no relationship with Christ will be able to see something in the way in which we live and work and will yearn to know about him.

Eugene Peterson in “*Living the Message*” gives another perspective - “*When we are in community with those Christ loves and redeems we are constantly finding out new things about them. They are new persons each morning, endless in their possibilities. We explore the fascinating depths of their friendship, share the secrets of their quest. It is impossible to be bored in such a community, impossible to feel alienated among such people.*”

- Are you inclusive or exclusive in your relationships with those you work with, live with or come into contact with on a daily basis?
- Are you intentional about including new people to your friendship group?
- Will the world recognise you as a disciple of Jesus by the way you live?

Prayer: God we want our lives in all aspects to reflect your generosity. Teach us to value those we interact with on a daily basis so that they may gain a glimpse of your love through us. **Amen**

## **WEDNESDAY: – Own The Mission**

**Proverbs 29: 18 – 23 The Message** <sup>“18</sup> *If people can’t see what God is doing, they stumble all over themselves; But when they attend to what he reveals, they are most blessed.”*

West View’s Vision reads as follows: *West View is Christ’s church, bringing all people into a transforming relationship with Christ.*

Our purpose is: *Changed people, changing our world.*

At West View we believe that teaching the Word of God has inspired our Mission and Vision statements. As we endeavour to live into these we believe that we will impact and influence our community for Christ.

- Will you take time to familiarise yourself with these two statements?
- What part of these two statements resonates with you?
- How can you, as one of God's changed people change the world around you?

Prayer: Lord, please seal our hearts and minds to your service and work. Keep us focused on sharing your love and grace with all whom we meet today. **Amen**

## THURSDAY – Rituals

**1 Corinthians 11: 24 & 25 (NIV)** *“And when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, “This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me.” In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me.”*

Common rituals reinforce our identity and mission. Eugene Peterson described the Eucharist ritual as *“the definitive action practised in the Christian community that keeps Jesus Christ before us as the Saviour of the world.”*

Take a few moments to read prayerfully through this United Methodist communion liturgy.

Pour out your Holy Spirit on us gathered here,  
and on these gifts of bread and wine  
Make them to be for us the body and blood of Christ,  
*that we may be for the world the body of Christ,*  
redeemed by his blood.  
By your Spirit make us one with Christ,  
one with each other,  
*and one in ministry to all the world,*  
until Christ comes in final victory  
and we feast at his heavenly banquet.  
*After receiving this is the concluding prayer:*  
Eternal God, we give you thanks for this holy mystery  
In which you have given yourself to us.  
*Grant that we may go into the world  
In the strength of your Spirit,*

*To give ourselves for others.*  
In the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

Notice how the liturgy emphasises the way in which we are strengthened and empowered to go into the world. The Spirit of God takes and blesses the gifts and talents we offer and gives them to the world as an extraordinary sign of God's infinite love.

- Have you discovered your unique gifting and how you could use it to share God's love?
- Is there anything which keeps you from offering your gifts and talents to God? If so, make this a part of your prayers today.

**Prayer:** Thank you Lord Jesus that each of us is unique and each has some gift or talent to offer you. Help us to use all that we are to serve you gladly and joyfully. **Amen**

## **FRIDAY: – Generosity**

**Ephesians 1: 1 – 23 The Message** <sup>3</sup>*How blessed is God! And what a blessing he is! He's the Father of our Master, Jesus Christ, and takes us to the high places of blessing in him.* <sup>4</sup>*Long before he laid down earth's foundations, he had us in mind, had settled on us as the focus of his love, to be made whole and holy by his love.* <sup>5</sup>*Long, long ago he decided to adopt us into his family through Jesus Christ. (What pleasure he took in planning this!)* <sup>6</sup>*He wanted us to enter into the celebration of his lavish gift-giving by the hand of his beloved Son."*

Today's reading focuses on God's amazing generosity to us. Read the entire scripture passage slowly giving thanks to God for the gift of his grace. We are called to respond to God's lavish generosity by giving not only of our finances but by the way in which we welcome, forgive, support and care for one another. James Harnish says in *Make a Difference* *"It's a tough world and if we try to live out God's purpose for us on our own it is easy to become discouraged. The transformation of this world is far too big and complex a mission for any of us to accomplish on our own. We need the strength, wisdom and accountability of a community to fulfil our calling. We follow our passion and find our place to serve in community with other disciples. We go into the world together."*

- How will you share God's generosity this week?
- Is there someone you need to encourage, care for or forgive this week?

- Choose a specific way to practice extravagant generosity whether by giving, welcoming, forgiving, supporting or caring for others.

**Prayer:** God of grace and generosity, shape my life this week so that I may live confidently in the knowledge that you love me unconditionally and give me grace to offer your love to others. **Amen**

**Application:** There may be people in our community who need to have their gifts or talents affirmed. Take time to identify someone whose gifting or passion is similar to yours and invite them to join you in ministry.

## SATURDAY

“*What if I read to you a story*” by Erin Hansen

*What if I read to you a story,  
Starting: “Once Upon A Time”,  
And you realised that it was your life,  
Spelt out in every line,  
Would you hear my voice with wonder,  
As it brushed across each word,  
And pray my arms had strength to hold,  
The truth about your world,  
Would your view in life be different,  
And would it shock you most to find,  
That the things you thought defined you,  
Could be summed up in just two lines  
And all the ones you took for granted  
The ins and outs of every day,  
Play a bigger part in who you are,  
Than you’d ever dared to say,  
Would you wonder at the pages left,  
And all the place that they’ll lead,  
And then vow to make each moment,  
One that you’d be proud to read,  
Because there is a story of your life,  
But it’s you that holds the pen,  
And I hope you fill the pages right,  
Before you reach the end.*

Week 5  
**INTO THE CRUCIBLE OF PAIN AND HOPE**

**MONDAY – I Feel Helpless; I Do Not Know What To Say.**

**Romans 8: 26** *“In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans.”*

In the 1990s I heard the news that there had been a bad road accident near where we lived, and that the driver had been killed in the collision. Someone had died. And then the details emerged. She was the wife of one of my friends. As the shock and horror started to sink in, I wondered what I should do, or what I could do.

I felt I ought to visit my friend and offer my condolences. But what could I say? No idea. No inspiration. Nothing would bring his wife back. I decided that, even though I felt absolutely helpless in this situation I should be there for him. Maybe I would be able to join others visiting my friend, and I could be part of the sorrowing crowd. The curtains were drawn and there were no vehicles in the driveway. I was on my own.

In the darkness of the lounge I saw my friend slumped in a chair. At my greeting, he got up and we faced each other. “Lord, give me words” was my unspoken prayer. Nothing. So I just stepped forward and gave him a hug. (I am not ‘huggy’ person, and this was out of character for me, one who likes to be in control of my emotions). There was an immediate response to my embrace. No feeling of rejection that I imagined might be the case. Just a warm hug, and then tears as we both stood there in silence. (Cowboys don’t cry, but we did, that afternoon) Words of condolence were exchanged, but they were meaningless in this human interaction of grieving.

What have I learned as I recall this painful memory? The Holy Spirit will give me the words to say. And it’s OK for me to ‘let it all hang out’ and cry!

- **Prayer:** Read Romans 8: 26 – 28, and ask God to guide you as you share your emotions with those suffering real pain.

**TUESDAY – Name Reality And Offer Hope In A Situation Of Pain**

**Jeremiah 31: 2 – 4** *“This is what the LORD says: “The people who survive the sword will find favour in the wilderness; I will come to give rest to Israel.” The Lord appeared to us in the past, saying: “I have loved you with an everlasting love; I*

*have drawn you with unfailing kindness. I will build you up again, and you, Virgin Israel, will be rebuilt. Again you will take up your timbrels and go out to dance with the joyful.*

It's about Graeme. In a meeting with a group, Graeme shared some of his pain. He was feeling totally inadequate because he could not find a suitable job so that he could support his wife and family. His temper seemed to be out of control. He thought he might be in danger of destroying his marriage. It was a hopeless situation. He confessed, I think I need to attend an "Anger Management" course.

A wise member of the group said, "You have recognised and named the problem. That's the first step towards healing and reconciliation. We understand something of your pain. Now we can pray with you (and your wife) and ask God to show you the way to healing." I believe we were called to pray specifically and be prepared to commit ourselves to some action.

I think most of us would have responded to Graeme's cry for help by promising to pray for him and his wife. Some might have suggested that "we know of a local church which runs a very good anger management programme", and maybe would have left it at that. That would have been the easy (and probably ineffective) way out.

If that's how we tend to react to a problem like Graeme's, we need to repent of our unwillingness and inability to get deeply involved.

The words of the song "*Kyrie Eleison*" (Lord, have mercy, Christ have mercy) made popular by *The Fisherfolk* are meaningful to me:

Look around you; can you see?  
Times are troubled, people grieve.  
See the violence, feel the heartache.  
Oh, my people, weep with me"  
**Kyrie Eleison, Christe Eleison**

- There is a way out. It involves a deeper relationship with Jesus. And we might be led to praying for and praying with Graeme and his wife. Praying together, weeping together, and being together. Showing the path of hope.

**Prayer:** "*Lord, make me a channel of Your peace. Where there's despair in life let me bring hope*"(Prayer of St Francis) Use these words to pray for someone you know so that you can make a difference.

## WEDNESDAY – Smiling Through The Tears

**1 Corinthians 15: 55 – 58** *“Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting? The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.”*

Diana was an acquaintance. Someone I did not know well. Nor did I see her often and our meetings were business-related. I knew that her daughter was a student at UCT. Then came the devastating news of the St James Church Massacre. It took place on Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> July 1993. (Maybe some of the readers will recall the incident!)

Four terrorists attacked the church during the evening service. Eleven members of the congregation were killed and 58 wounded. Diana’s daughter was at the evening service, but escaped, physically unharmed. Some of her student friends were among the dead. It was impossible that she and other students could forget an event that was life-changing and which will still evoke memories of terror and panic 25 years later.

Diana told me of the amazing response of the people who had been there at the time. Guided by the church leadership, almost everyone pursued the path of reconciliation and forgiveness. No revenge or retribution! There was no way that the event could be brushed aside. It was an intentional brutal attack. This sort of response could only be through the intervention of The Holy Spirit.

From Kyrie Eleison again: A song of forgiveness and reconciliation.

Walk among them, I'll go with you.  
Reach out to them with my hands.  
Suffer with me, and together,  
We will serve them, help them stand.  
Forgive us, Father, hear our prayer.  
We will walk with you anywhere.  
Through Your suffering, with forgiveness,  
Take Your life into the world.

What better way was there to witness as Christ’s followers to the vicious, heartless attack than to cry out with the love of God? Yes, and through the tears, especially as they mourned the deaths of their friends. Jesus would understand, even if the world did not. Did the forgiveness happen immediately? I doubt it. It must have been a gradual, and intentional process. And it must have involved personal confession as all involved recognised their own sinfulness and need for ongoing forgiveness.

- **For Reflection Prayer:** . What is our response to some of the terrible things reported in the media? Often, these events are triggered by hatred, jealousy, a feeling of inadequacy and worthlessness. And an unthinking desire for retribution. Let us always give thanks for the hope that we have in our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Tell yourself: *“I am forgiven!”* Luke 7:40 – 48.

## THURSDAY – What Would Jesus Do?

**Philippians 2: 1 – 11.** *Therefore if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind. Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others. In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.*

*And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross! Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

It wasn't all that long ago for us to see someone wearing a wrist band with the letters WWJD prominently displayed. *“What would Jesus do?”* was the message. But it was more than that because it declared that the wearer was a Christian, and was a wonderful (but probably silent) witness. Wrist bands are common these days, but we seldom see WWJD displayed.

Today, when it's common for people to boost themselves by making personal statements about their achievements, the words that Paul wrote in his letter to the Christians in Philippi (Phil 2:1 – 11) might seem strange. I recently attended a funeral service where Frank Sinatra's well known song *“I did it my way”* was played as a tribute to the person whose life was being remembered. Ego-centred.

But Paul said just the opposite! Get your ego out of the way so that Christ's love can shine through. Become a servant, (just as Jesus did) rather than striving to be the boss or VIP”. Learn obedience in the setting where the person in charge appears to get his/her own way.

- **For reflection Prayer:** Have you heard Jesus call to you and say, “Come, follow me”? Have you understood the implications?

## FRIDAY – Obedience 101. Making A Difference

Wesley’s Covenant Prayer: It’s good to review this and reflect on our lives as we seek to make a difference.

I am no longer my own, but yours.

Put me to what you will, rank me with whom you will;

Put me to doing, put me to suffering;

Let me be employed for you, or laid aside for you,

Exalted for you, or brought low for you;

Let me be full: Let me be empty; Let me have all things; Let me have nothing:

I freely and wholeheartedly yield all things to your pleasure and disposal.

And now, glorious and blessed God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit,

You are mine and I am yours. So be it.

And the covenant now made on earth, let it be ratified in heaven.

Amen.

One of my favourite songs is “***Spirit of the Living God, fall afresh on me***”. I like to think of its illustration of recycling!

**Break me.** Imagine piles of waste glass, gathered for recycling. It all needs to be broken into smaller pieces.

**Melt Me.** Before the glass can be reused, it must be melted down, with all its colours, thicknesses and shapes made into a homo-geneous mass.

**Mould me.** Now the molten mass can be poured into a suitable mould, one that glass manufacturer needs.

**Fill me.** At last, the shards of broken glass have been transformed into something useful

- Isn’t this what we are asking God’s Holy Spirit to with us, and for us, so that we can truly make a difference to the lives of the many people we meet who are suffering and in pain, whether it be physical or emotional? Yes, so that Jesus’ name is glorified.

**Pray the Covenant Prayer and make it yours. Kyrie Eleison, Christe Eleison.**

## Saturday Reflection

When peace like a river, attendeth my way,  
When sorrows like sea billows roll  
Whatever my lot, thou hast taught me to say  
It is well, it is well, with my soul  
It is well  
With my soul  
It is well, it is well with my soul  
Though Satan should buffet, though trials should come,  
Let this blest assurance control,  
That Christ has regarded my helpless estate,  
And hath shed His own blood for my soul  
It is well (it is well)  
With my soul (with my soul)  
It is well, it is well with my soul  
My sin, oh, the bliss of this glorious thought  
My sin, not in part but the whole,  
Is nailed to the cross, and I bear it no more,  
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, o my soul  
It is well (it is well)  
With my soul (with my soul)  
It is well, it is well with my soul

Week 6  
**FROM HERE TO KINGDOM COME**

**MONDAY – Begin with the End**

**Matthew 6: 9 & 10 NIV** “...Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name; Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.”

**Luke 17: 20 & 21 NIV** Once, on being asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, Jesus replied, “The coming of the kingdom of God is not something that can be observed, nor will people say, ‘Here it is,’ or ‘There it is,’ because the kingdom of God is in your midst.”

We are called to be the kingdom of God. Living it and sharing it each day. How we spend our time and use our energies determines the kingdom-shaped difference we will make in the world.

James Harnish in *Make a Difference*, follows the theme “Begin [to bring God’s kingdom on earth] with the end in mind”. As Christians we need to grasp or imagine God’s vision. We need to see situations in our daily life; and then imagine the result when Jesus lays His hand on it.

- Think of needs you encounter in your day. How would Jesus fulfil these? THEN: how can YOU achieve it for Him?
- Imagine God (or his kingdom) making a difference in your relationships. See how He would heal them or enrich them. THEN: what can YOU do to bring about this healing or enriching?

*If people can't see what God is doing, they stumble all over themselves; But when they attend to what he reveals, they are most blessed.*

Proverbs 29:18 The Message

- Take hold of a situation that has pricked your conscience lately; that seemed to stay with you: ponder on it; think about it; pray about it. What are you going to do about it?

**Prayer:** Lord, help us begin each day and task with a vision of Your destination in mind. Remind us daily that seemingly insignificant acts can make an eternal difference. May we be ever mindful of Your kingdom on earth as it is in heaven. **Amen**

## TUESDAY – Live the Future in the Present

**Revelation 21: 3 – 4 NIV** *“And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Look! God’s dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.”*

*“What we imagine for the future shapes the way we live now.”* (James Harnish). We therefore need to understand what the future is when God is in control. Once we understand this, we can live in ways that reflect God’s ultimate plan.

- *“....nation will not take up sword against nation, nor train for war anymore.”* Isaiah 2: 4  
Therefore we work towards peace now.
- *“... There before me was a great multitude that none could count, From every nation, tribe, people and language...”* Rev 7: 9  
Therefore we work to overcome racial and ethnic conflict now.
- *“He will wipe every tear from their eyes...”* Rev 21: 4  
Therefore we care for each other now.
- Where can you bring peace, or overcome racial conflict? What needs do you see that you can take care of?

*“If we listen to how bad things are, we come to believe that the world is an awful place.”* (Make A Difference). But there are wonderful and amazing things happening all around us. Negativity breeds more negativity. Instead if we try to see the good around us, we will be encouraged to bring that goodness into our own worlds.

- Spend a few moments thinking about this quote from Albert Einstein. *“There are two ways to live your life: you can live as if nothing is a miracle; or you can live as if everything is a miracle.”*

**Prayer:** Lord, thank you for the miracle of life. Grant me dreams and visions to see your end intentions. May Your kingdom become a reality here and now in my life as I seek ways to bring peace and harmony. Lead me to the needs that I can serve. **Amen**

## WEDNESDAY – Big Difference in Little Things

**Luke 13: 18 & 19** *“Then Jesus asked, “What is the kingdom of God like? What shall I compare it to? It is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his garden. It grew and become a tree, and the birds perched in its branches.”*

A seed contains life within it, and when nurtured it grows to its full potential. When we plant seeds we have not certainty that they will all grow, yet we still do so with the hope and belief that they will flourish. We are called to plant and nurture seeds. *“We make a kingdom-shaped difference when we invest our energy, time and talents in a vision larger than our own self-interest”* (James Harnish).

- Be challenged to smile and greet everyone you encounter today. Or make that phone call that you know would make a difference?

Mother Theresa is well known for saying *“do small things with great love.”*

Most of the time the kingdom of God is found in our own “back yards” – attended to by ordinary people with ordinary skills, but who have extraordinary vision on what God can do. Do the little acts of kindness anyway, even if it seems they will not make a difference. God has “a surprising way of expanding our efforts...” (James Harnish).

- Those ideas that pop into your head when wondering what you can do or as you experience situations through your day – pursue them! Act on them this week. They may just be God’s prompting!

**Prayer:** Lord help me to be attentive to the little things that will make a difference in someone’s life. I pray for guidance and prompting to the needs around me. **Amen**

## THURSDAY – Recognising the Kingdom of God

**John 20: 11 – 17** Jesus appears to Mary Magdalene.

*“..... <sup>16</sup>Jesus said to her, “Mary.” She turned toward him and cried out in Aramaic, “Rabboni!” (which means teacher).*

**Luke 24: 35 – 43** Jesus appears in the Upper Room.

*“<sup>36</sup>While they were still talking about this, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, “Peace be with you.”*

**Mark 16: 12** Jesus appears to two of His disciples.

*“Afterward Jesus appeared in a different form to two of them while they were walking in the country.”*

Jesus and the kingdom of God will come and meet us in whatever circumstance we find ourselves – happiness, sorrow, illness or tragedy. The moments of recognition cannot be engineered. They simply arrive uninvited. However, as seen from the readings above, those to whom Jesus comes unexpectedly were in fact, thinking of Him, looking for Him or talking about Him. Therefore the recognition of Him and His kingdom depends on the level of openness that we have towards Him.

- Would you recognise Jesus if he prompted your conscience at home, at work, while driving, shopping, or interacting with people?
- Do you assign Jesus to various time slots: personal quiet time, church on a Sunday and home group meetings?
- Consider how you can develop an openness to Jesus and His Holy Spirit throughout your day?

**Prayer:** Open our spirits that we may know Your loving guidance. Open our hearts that we may receive your love. Open our minds and eyes to the needs of Your world. And so may we recognise Your kingdom in all we do. **Amen**

## **FRIDAY – Go! Be Faithful to the End**

**Galatians 6: 8 – 10** *“Whoever sows to please their flesh, from flesh will reap destruction; whoever sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life. Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.”*

**Acts 5: 20** *“Go, stand in the temple courts,” he said, “and tell the people all about this new life.”*

**Luke 9: 60** *“Jesus said to him, “Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and proclaim the kingdom of God.”*

We have to live our lives believing that God will heal His world in the end. James Harnish reminds us that “we are not called to be successful, but to be obedient.”

Throughout the the Bible, the word “Go” is used many times. According to *“Learn the Bible”*, it is used in 228 verses ([learnthebible.org](http://learnthebible.org)). The meaning is clear – we have got to get out there and do something. He calls us to action.

- Take time to imagine the scene where you and God together review your life. What single step could you take today to most minimize the regret factor at the end of your life? (John Ortberg)
- What does GET GOING in terms of God's kingdom here on earth mean to you?

**Prayer:** Go forth into the world in peace; be of good courage; hold fast to that which is good. Strengthen the fainthearted and help support the weak and afflicted. Love and serve your Lord obediently rejoicing in His power. **Amen**

### **Take Action**

*What do you plan to do with your one wild and precious life?"* (Mary Oliver)

Take the church bulletin each week, reflect on the requests / needs that are being made and ascertain which ones you can fulfil or take part in.

Take the Prayer Request list and be faithful in praying for those names – they are part of our community.

***Malihambe – Let the Word Spread***

## **SATURDAY REFLECTION**

**Stubborn Ounces** by Bonaro W. Overstreet

*(To One Who Doubts the Worth of*

*Doing Anything If You Can't Do Everything)*

You say the little efforts that I make  
will do no good: they never will prevail  
to tip the hovering scale  
to tip the hovering scale  
where Justice hangs in balance.  
I don't think I ever thought they would.  
But I am prejudiced beyond debate  
in favour of my right to choose which side  
shall feel the stubborn ounces of my weight.

Because we cannot do EVERYTHING – it is not an excuse to do NOTHING! When we seek to live out God's love, He will use every one of our efforts. We may not see the end result or know how many pieces it took, but be assured, we are part of a much bigger picture.