

St Peter's Church, Wanneroo

BIBLE STUDY NOTES

October 30th - November 13th, 2022

The Bible readings at our services for the Sundays from October until Christmas are the readings set in the Australian Anglican Lectionary. As is usual at St Peter's, all four passages of scripture will be read at the 7.45am services, whilst only two of the passages will be read at the 9.30am service. The passages to be read at the 9.30am service are shown in italics in the notes for each week—but, please read all four passages!

These notes are not intended to be a set of full Bible study notes for home groups, but hopefully will provide a basic framework for looking at the scriptures prior to each Sunday's services.

Questions and quotes are taken from:

- ◇ Wright, Tom (2012). *Twelve Months of Sundays*. London:SPCK.
- ◇ Wright, Tom (2001). *Luke for Everyone*. London:SPCK

Sunday 30th October

Theme: Seek and save the lost.

Sermon passage: Luke 19:1-10 ~ Zacchaeus - the lost saved

Habakkuk 2:1-4

Psalm 119:137-144

2Thess. 1:1-4, 11-12

Luke 19:1-10

This week's readings speak, in different ways, about trust in God and obedience in the face of difficulties.

Read Habakkuk 2:1-4

It is thought by some scholars that Habakkuk was written just before the exile of God's people in Babylon. Chapter 1 (it's worth reading!) is a lament as the prophet argues that God should take action in the face of what threatens. In 2:1 he sets himself as a watchman, looking for God's response; and in 2:2-4 God tells him he will respond—and the response will be one that can be relied upon, it can be written down and shared by heralds who take it to the people.

Read Psalm 119:137-144

Despite 'enemies' who ignore God (v.139), despite being 'lowly and despised' (v.141), and despite trouble and distress coming upon him (v.143), the Psalmist finds delight in God's commands.

subversive' teaching about *agape*, mutual love and support—that flip side is that “each must contribute to the best of their ability, not simply sponge off the other”. Does what Paul writes in these verses have any relevance to us today, individually and as a church community?

Read Luke 21:5-19

We like to feel in control of our lives, especially when we are faced with uncertain or dangerous times, and that can sometimes lead Christians to read more into scripture than is intended. Tom Wright writes that in these verses what Jesus has to say “is emphatically and specifically about the fall of Jerusalem, not about the end of the world” - and, of course, Jerusalem and the Temple were indeed destroyed by the Romans some 35 years later. Wright then goes on to say that Jesus' words “... may be taken as a model for all living that peers into an uncertain future”. He also states:

“The Church in many parts of the world lives with wars, rumours of war, purges and persecutions on a daily basis; those of us who don't should read passages like this in prayerful family solidarity with those who do. A church not being persecuted should also, sometimes, ask itself why not.”

Do we ask ourselves that question often enough—are we the challenge we should be to those who live by values that are different to those of the Kingdom of God? We live today in a world where peace and security is more uncertain than it has been for many decades. Where, in practice and in reality, do we find our security?

Sunday 13th November

Theme: Signs of the end times

Sermon passage: Luke 21:5-19 ~ Certainty in uncertain times

Isaiah 65:17-25

Psalm 62

2 Thess. 3:6-13

Luke 21:5-19

Read Isaiah 65:17-25

These verses are beautiful: *and* they are also meant to be taken seriously! They are God's plan, God's future for his creation. Read Revelation 21:1-4, 22-27 and 22:1-5. The Gospel promise is not that we will escape from this world of sin and suffering, but that this world will be renewed in a way that is wonderful beyond anything we can imagine. When do you find yourself reflecting on God's future?

Read Psalm 62

Verses 1-2 and 11-12 are the 'bookends' of this Psalm. In between we are given glimpses of the threats or pressures the author of the Psalm faces (vv.3-4, 9-10): but he does not ask for anything, he simply focuses on trust in God.

Read 2 Thessalonians 3:6-13

Tom Wright states that these verses are the flip side of Paul's practical but, in the world of his day, 'politically

Are there echoes between the passage from Habakkuk, the Psalm passage, and what we face as Christians today?

Read 2 Thessalonians 1:1-12

The Christians at Thessalonica face persecutions and trials (v.4), but despite this they are an example of perseverance and faith that Paul can give thanks for. He is confident that God will give them relief when Jesus returns (vv.6-7), but meanwhile he prays that they will continue in their faith so that Jesus may be glorified (vv.11-12).

Read Luke 19:1-10

Zachaeus was making the best of living in a land occupied by the Romans—it seems likely that he had set up a 'tax collector franchise' employing other tax collectors, and as a result was wealthy. But in Jesus he saw and responded to God's call to live life for God and not for himself.

We live in uncertain times in an insecure world: it sometimes seems as if 'the bad guys' are far too successful!

◇ What do you think Luke wants us to understand about the link between generosity and salvation?

Looking at these 4 very different passages of scripture:

◇ What response do you find yourself wanting to make—perhaps something new, or perhaps just persevering in what you are already doing?

◇ What do these passages lead you to pray for?

Sunday 6th November

Theme: Jesus' answers teach us much.

Sermon passage: Luke 20:20-40 ~ Trying to catch out Jesus

Haggai 1:15b - 2:9

Psalm 98

2Thess. 2:1-5, 13-17

Luke 20:20-40

Read Haggai 1:15b-2:9

God's people have returned from exile. Haggai's first message (1:1-11) is that priority should be given not their own homes and well-being but the rebuilding of the Temple. When they obey (1:12-14), Haggai has a second message for them from the Lord (1:15b-2:9). How would you summarise the two parts of this second message—2:2-5 and 2:6-9?

Read Psalm 98

This is a much loved Psalm of praise—some phrases are often used in prayers and hymns and will be familiar to you. What ideas about God do you see in this Psalm that reflect the message God gave to his people through Haggai's message in the first reading, Haggai 1:15b-2:9?

Read 2 Thessalonians 2:1-5, 13-17

Paul seeks to correct a misunderstanding (or perhaps a deliberate distortion) by some Thessalonian Christians of his earlier teaching in his first letter concerning the coming of the 'day of the Lord' (vv.1-5). He reminds them about what they have experienced of God (vv.13-15), and urges them to stand firm in trusting God (vv.15-17).

What common themes do you see in the readings from Haggai, Psalm 96, and these verses from 2 Thessalonians?

Read Luke 20:20-40

In vv.20-26, the Jewish authorities set what appears to be a foolproof trap for Jesus. Either he says 'yes, pay taxes to Roman Emperor Caesar' and is in trouble with the Jewish authorities; or he says 'no, don't pay taxes to Caesar' and be in trouble with the Roman authorities. But Jesus turns their trap upside down. Can you think of a modern dilemma, like paying taxes to Caesar, that Christians must face?

In vv.27-40 Jesus faces another trap, from the Sadducees. The response Jesus gives is the only time in the Gospels that Jesus discusses the resurrection of the dead, and again he turns the trap on its head. How would you summarise what Jesus says about the resurrection of the dead in vv.35-36? In vv.37-38 he uses the scriptures that the Sadducees themselves relied upon to show how their view, that there would be no resurrection, was wrong.

Sometimes there is clear link between the Lectionary scripture passages for a Sunday. Do you see a link or theme between these four passages?