



ALLANDER EVANGELICAL CHURCH

FELLOWSHIP NEWSLETTER

7th June, 2021

Sunday Sermon: Joshua 1: 1 – 9

In the second sermon on the theme, *"You have not gone this way before"* preached in the context of considering the way ahead as lockdown eases slightly and thoughts are turning to whatever the 'new normal' might be, the emphasis is on understanding the nature and implications of the task ahead of us.

With the assurance that God, who knows the way, is with us and that his purposes have not changed, Joshua, now left to face the task alone, is reminded of the importance of that presence of God in this challenging situation.

The words *"as I was with Moses, so I will be with you"* are spoken to the apprehensive Joshua who is fully aware that God's purpose and power were evident in Moses' time but is anxious about its potency in his time of leadership and for his generation. With this promise, that is not in doubt: he need not worry.

He is also repeatedly told to *"be strong and very courageous"* as he now undertakes the task of shouldering this responsibility – without Moses and on his own, as it were. Yet, he is assured of the divine strength and enabling needed as he commits himself to the task.

And, what does this say to us? God is the same and is able to be present in our day as he has been in the past: but it needs commitment and trusting endeavour on our part in seeking his presence, focusing on the task in hand, and invoking his strength knowing that it will not be in vain because He is still building His church.

Message from Sue Huggins in Oaxaca

We've received the following article from Sue who works with Inga and the Translation Team in Mexico and for whom we pray regularly. Contains a timely challenge.

The Epistle to the Romans contains teaching relevant to today. An ongoing theme is that persistent unbelief leads to dire consequences. The Old Testament is the prelude to the New Testament, and the prophets are quite sharp in their rebuke of the nation of Israel in refusing to accept God's way. At the end of Chapter 10 is the heart-breaking plea as God entreats them, "All day long I opened my arms to them, but they were disobedient and rebellious." God longs for reconciliation and restored relationship, but we turn away.

Hardened unbelief results in becoming dull and apathetic towards spiritual issues, as in Romans 11:8. One commentator wrote that the word in Greek, which some translate as a state of being stupefied, alludes to being overstimulated by too many distractions, leading to overload. It brought to mind the effects of social media, the internet, mass media, and all the other stimuli which bombard us from all sides. If one is not careful, they can lead to apathy and being numbed. It is just too much to take in and absorb, so one may become cold to the issues which really matter. The process can lead to spiritual blindness and deafness to what God is trying to tell us. The abundance of technology, the very things that we put

our trust in, can become a snare and a trap.

God's still, small voice continues to summon us amidst the blare of competing loud voices. Will we stop and yield to the divine call? That is the ongoing challenge for us all.

More reflections

Due to pressure of space last week we held over some of the reflections on Exodus. Here are some more:

- Exodus opens with Moses seeing God's glory at the Burning Bush and it ends with God's glory filling the Tabernacle. God never fades away. He is still the same. We should make sure that in our journey we live our lives for his glory.
- Exodus shows the relationship between God and his people. God is always faithful but his people are not always so. Indeed, in the period Moses was up the mountain they had created alternative idols. But Moses intercedes on their behalf.
- Moses' concern was for the presence of God to be with his people. That is still the need. We now have the Holy Spirit ensuring God's presence with us. How much

are we reflecting God's presence?
Are we being distinctive so that we are seen as the people of God?

Elders' Meeting

The Elders express their appreciation for all the prayers for them as they met last week to envision the way ahead for the church. Details will be issued later when they become more concrete but current thinking includes a Family Fun Day in July, with Brian Lowry, Jenny Haggerty and the MAD ministries team from 10.30am to 12 noon on Friday 2nd and Saturday 3rd. Flyers are being prepared and an advert will appear in the Community Magazine next month. There is also the prospect of involvement in a national outreach venture next Easter. Please continue to pray for guidance and enabling.

Pray for:

All our friends in, and connected with, Allander and for those serving the Lord in different spheres especially as many of the traditional activities are still curtailed because of Covid restrictions. Special prayer for Elsie McIntyre and family at this time of bereavement.

Faith Mission Prayer Meeting

The FM Prayer Union will be held on Zoom at 7.30pm tonight.

Finally,

The removal of some of the Covid 19 restrictions over the past few months has been most welcome and has allowed us to enjoy fellowship in the church building each Sunday. Reading Paul's encouragement to *'Sing to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs' (Ephesians 5:19)* reminded me that the restrictions still prohibit us from doing so corporately and audibly. However, singing can also be done inaudibly as Paul continues: *'sing and make music in your hearts to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything.'* (Ephesians 5:20). So, until the day comes when the restrictions allow us to join together to *'shout for joy to the Lord' (Psalm 100:1)* may we continue to be filled with the Spirit and make music in our hearts to the Lord.

David Jack