

# **St Martins C3 – April 28, 2024**

## ***What You Bring to the Table – Iron Sharpens Iron***

### **Sermon Notes:**

We have been looking over the last month at creating Growth Relationships. This involves having mutual, regular conversations focused on growing spiritually through encouragement and accountability.

This week, we want to look at what you, as the person wanting to grow, talk about while having these conversations. Next week we'll explore how you respond to what others bring.

**Read Galatians 6:1-3; Jeremiah 2:11-13; 2 Peter 3:18**

### **1 – Sins**

The first thing we could bring to the table is a sin. We struggle with something and so we ask the other person to help us.

**Read James 5:16**

It is difficult to bring up our sins with another person, but if we are honest with others we can see healing begin.

Overcoming our sins involves confession and repentance. Confession is about bringing the sin into the light. Repentance is about working on practical ways to turn from our sin.

### **Questions:**

1 – What sins from the last week do I need to confess?

2 – What ideas do I have of ways I can turn away from my sin?

### **Idols**

Idols are the broken mindsets that sit underneath our sinful actions. Anything that absorbs our heart and imagination more than God. Anything so central and essential to our life, that should we lose it, our life would feel hardly worth living.

### Questions:

1 – Complete the statement: If I didn't have ... I would be devastated. (e.g. friends, sex, success, position, reputation, wealth, beauty, intelligence)

2 – What do the things that make me angry reveal about what is most important to me?

### Growth

Regardless of our maturity, there are ways we can all enlarge ourselves. This life of faith is a life of growth. Where the dead things are removed and the good things are given space and energy to grow.

### **Read Colossians 2:7**

A simple principle of gardening is that whatever you pay skilled attention to is going to grow. This is not only true of gardens but of all of our lives. We need to look for areas of weakness but also focus on our strengths.

### Questions:

1 – What am I most excited about in following after God?

2 – Which of the four relationship areas do I sense God is calling me to grow?

## **Connect Group Material:**

### Key Point

*When we have a conversation with others we should talk to them about our sins, idols, and growth areas.*

### Questions

*What stood out to you from this week's message?*

*What does this message tell you about God?*

*What does this message tell you about humans?*

*How are you going in forming a Growth Relationship?*

*Why do you think the Bible emphasizes Christians helping each other overcome sin?*

*What prevents us from telling someone else our sins?*

*What would it look like to have a repentant attitude, rather than just confess sins?*

*Share what you think of the concept of broken ways of thinking being idols.*

*Talk about the type of things that could be idols. What are you most in danger of making an idol?*

*Think of something non-spiritual that you have grown in, how would you apply the same methodology to spiritual growth?*

*Name an a) weakness and b) strength you want to grow in.*

## **Monday Devotion: Prayers for Growth**

**Read Ephesians 1:15-20**

A regular pattern of the New Testament writers, especially Paul, was to spend time letting the people to whom he was writing know the things he prayed for them. These prayers are great gifts to us for a couple of reasons.

Firstly, because they are demonstrations of the ways we can pray for each other. These could be prayers that we pray over the other member of our Growth Relationship.

Secondly, they show us the kind of ways in which Paul expected members of the church would grow. This week, we will look at five elements that come through as we seek to grow.

In Ephesians 1, Paul prays for the people of Ephesus to grow in their knowledge of God. He wanted them to have spiritual wisdom and insight. He desired for their hearts to be filled with light and hope as they know they are God's holy people. Finally, he wants them to know the power of the resurrection in their lives and their church.

Today, consider whether you know God in the way that Paul is talking about. Paul knew that a vibrant relationship with God would be the thing that would transform them more than anything else. Why not reach out to God now and ask Him to reveal more of Himself to you.

## **Tuesday Devotion: Prayer for Fruitful Living**

***Read Hebrews 13:20-21***

The conclusion to the book of Hebrews is a prayer the writer has for their listeners. It is a beautiful prayer, reminding people that we serve a God of peace, who raised Jesus from the dead and made a covenant with His blood.

The heart of the prayer is the entreaty in verse 21 that God's people be equipped with all they need to do God's will and produce fruit that is pleasing to Him.

This gives the image of a house that has required repair, and the builder has been given all the resources to do the work to make something new and beautiful.

The writer sees that an important part of the Christian life is doing the will of God. This covers everything from developing our relationship with God to doing works that build God's Kingdom.

God has given you everything you need to live the life He has called you to live. You may not see the full picture of what He is doing in you just yet. But if you faithfully stay connected to Him you will begin to see the resources He has given to us all to make us more like Him, producing good fruit.

## **Wednesday Devotion: Prayer for Relationships**

***Read Colossians 1:3-5***

Relationships can be hard. There are times when misunderstanding, bitterness and selfish motives make them nearly impossible. Yet, they are worth persevering in because of their importance in God's mind.

Here we see the Apostle Paul commending the people of Colossae for their love of God's people. What is interesting is what Paul identifies as the reason for their love. He tells them their love comes from their confident hope of what God has reserved for them in Heaven.

In other words, they love each other because they have had a vision of the age to come where all relationships will be characterised by wholeness. This is the fruit of the gospel. As a result, they worked hard in the world now to ensure their relationships matched up.

I don't know how you are doing with the relationships in your life at the moment. Maybe you have fought with your husband or wife. Maybe you have an irritating person in your connect group. Maybe your workmates are making life difficult.

Bearing in mind what Paul has prayed, why not enter the next interaction with them with some grace and a desire to have complete and healthy relationships with them.

## **Thursday Devotion: Prayer for Strength**

***Read Ephesians 3:14-21***

Out of all of these prayers, this is probably my favourite. It is one of the most wonderful prayers of the New Testament. Paul draws us through the realms of Heaven and Earth (verse 15), has us consider God's unlimited resources (verse 16) and then asks us to let Christ be at home in our hearts (verse 17).

As I read it I am drawn to consider the enormous privilege it is to worship God and be one of His children. The words alone fill my heart with inner strength. It is even more powerful when I submit myself to the one who enlivens the words.

Then Paul continues and shows us the thing that really gives us inner strength: the love of Jesus.

It is worth marinating in these phrases as we seek to grow. Today, why not read the words of verses 18 and 19 three times? Pause on words and phrases and open your heart to Jesus.

Ask Jesus to come and fill your life again and make these words a reality for you. As you do, may you freshly experience His love and sense the way He is growing you and building you to be complete with all the fullness of life and power that comes from God.

## **Friday Devotion: Prayer for a Completed Task**

**Read Philippians 1:3-11**

Paul wrote to the people of Philippi at a tough time in his life. he was imprisoned from the gospel and separated from the people he loved. Yet, the book of Philippians is the book of joy because Paul is confident that God is doing good works in their lives.

Paul could see what many of us cannot, that one day the work that God has started will be completed in our lives. Let me ask you today, do you have the same certainty in your life?

We are surrounded by our weaknesses and there are times we may wonder whether we are being transformed. We might feel as though we are struggling with the same issues over and over. Yet, we can be certain that God, who began the good work within us will complete it.

The prayer of Paul reminds us not to give up. We need to keep pursuing the fruit of our salvation.

In some older video games, you couldn't see how much health an enemy had, and a battle would go on for a long time. There were times I felt like throwing the game away but then all of a sudden, the next hit would defeat the bad guy. It can be the same in our spiritual growth. We need to have an attitude that says we will keep on doing the right things until we see fruit come from it. Persevere!