**St Martins C3 – July 3, 2022**

**Sharing our faith – Staying Motivated**

**Sermon Summary:**

As followers of Jesus we know that the message of the gospel is the most important message in the world. Therefore, we want to confidently and competently communicate it to others.

In this series we have explored the need to make lots of connections with others, have lots of helpful God conversations and lead those who are willing to start their journey with Jesus. All that requires us to be quite thoughtful and intentional with what we do with our time and energy. All of which we may be willing to do, but we can easily be distracted with other demands in our lives, as well as discouraged when we don’t see the change in others we long to see.

**So, how do we stay motivated to share our faith with others?**

**Read: Mark 6:30-34**

Despite a lot going on in Jesus life, Jesus takes the time to minister to those who came to him. We see in this passage that the people’s NEED motivated Jesus. We see that His heart was moved with COMPASSION for them.

**Read: John 5:19-20**

We see in this passage that Jesus draws His motivation and strength to do God’s Kingdom work, from His Father. In times of prayer, Jesus becomes attuned to what His Father is doing and joins Him in doing it. Jesus encourages us to do the same (Jn 15)

In prayer, our motivation to share our faith will be revealed and shaped by God. As Martin Luther said: *“The less I pray, the harder it gets; the more I pray, the better it goes.”* **What Jesus modelled is that the best way to stay MOTIVATED to share our faith is to PRAY.**

1. **Prayer connects your heart with God’s heart - PASSION.**
2. **Prayer changes your PERSPECTIVE.** – We will see people the way God sees people.
3. **Prayer helps define your PURPOSE –** An important aspect of our life’s purpose is sharing our faith with others.
4. **Prayer will connect you with God’s POWER –** Acts 1:8

You cannot consistently pray for those who are lost and not be motivated to help people on their journey towards Christ. God will change your heart, then through you, change the world around you. Sharing our faith starts in prayer and is sustained in prayer.

In the context of building a relationship with God in prayer and joining with Him in praying for those who are lost around you:

1. Pray for opportunities.
2. Pray for specific people
3. Pray for passion and wisdom.

**Connect Group Resources:**

Videos and questions from the Alpha course has been made available to your Connect group leader, which they will share with you, when your group next meets.

You may also like to discuss as a group how prayer has motivated you to share your faith, as well as how you pray for others.

**Notes:**

**Monday’s Devotion – Abide in His Presence**

**John 15:4** (NKJV)

*Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me.*

Abide is an Old English word we don’t use much anymore. In this context, it means to, dwell with, or stay for an extended period of time.

What Jesus is communicating here, is the need for us to spend time abiding, (dwelling, being in), His presence. It is from that dwelling place with God that we will be empowered to do His work.

This seems very counter-intuitive in the busy world that we live in. Productivity is valued and spending time in worship and prayer, doesn’t, on the surface, seem to be a very productive use of our time. However, Jesus is assuring us here that the opposite is true.

If we push on doing what we think God wants us to do without God, we will achieve nothing of eternal value. But if we abide with Christ, He will empower us to be fruitful in His Kingdom work.

This week, may you enjoy the benefits of abiding with Christ. May you be refreshed in His presence and empowered by Him for all that He is calling you to do.

**Tuesdays Devotion – Passion**

**Matthew 23:37-39**

*“Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were not willing.**Look, your house is left to you desolate. For I tell you, you will not see me again until you say, ‘Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.’”*

This is an interesting insight into some deep emotions Jesus was feeling at the time. If you have ever been to Jerusalem, you will know that you get a clear view of the old city from the top of the Mount of Olives. The Mount of Olives, is a small hill beside Jerusalem, probably only 50 metres higher than the old city. Jesus is walking over this hill and sees Jerusalem before him and says these words, which reveal His heart for the city and its people.

Jesus was passionate about everyone having the opportunity to come into His Kingdom. This included this city which was close to God’s heart. However, the very place that should have responded with open arms, was the very place where Jesus would be crucified.

In prayer, God’s passion becomes our passion. Our heart will break for those who are lost around us. Some will respond positively to Christ and His Kingdom, others will reject this message. That will discourage us, like it did Jesus, but that ought not dissipate our passion to see His Kingdom come and His will being done, here as it is in Heaven.

**Wednesday’s Devotion – Perspective**

**Matthew 9:36-38**

*When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, “The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.”*

Abiding with Jesus will give us a passion for those who are lost and will also shift our perspective on how we see the world around us.

On a number of occasions the disciples were simply annoyed by the crowds that gathered around Jesus. However, Jesus has a different perspective. Jesus sees how lost and desperate they were and knew He had the power to help them. Jesus is encouraging His disciples here to think the same way.

The image Jesus uses here is very clear and powerful. Jesus is effectively saying, what farmer would sit in his house and do nothing if all his wheat fields were ripe and ready to harvest. No farmer would just sit and watch a harvest go to waste. They would get up, gather others to help and harvest the crop.

What Jesus is encouraging his disciples and us to do is to SEE the harvest that is all around us. People all around us may not realise their need for God’s Kingdom, but they desperately need it.

May our perspective be shaped by God’s perspective of the world around us, as we pray.

**Thursday’s Devotion – Purpose.**

**Luke 19:8-10**

*But Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, “Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount.” Jesus said to him, “Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham.**For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.”*

We know from Luke 19:5 that Jesus knew he was going to stay at Zac’s house that night. What this tells us is that Jesus lived a life of purpose. Which we also see expressed in the verses above. Jesus’ life purpose was to *“seek and to save the lost.”*

Jesus didn’t just wander around Israel waiting to see who would come to Him. Jesus was very intentional about where he went and who He connected with. It would seem that in the place of prayer with His Father, God gave Jesus insights as to what He would lead Him to do that day.

We might be thinking, “that’s what God does for Jesus, but He won’t do that for us,” but we are talking about the same God who still has the same purpose.

We ought to be approaching our abiding time with God in prayer, expecting God to reveal how He is going to work around us that day. It may just be a glimpse or a thought at first, but it will become clearer as we keep seeking God and walk in obedience to Him throughout our day.

**Friday’s Devotion – Power**

**Acts 1:8**

*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 same power that worked through Jesus is the same power working through us, as we share our faith with others.

We will witness God do some extraordinary things as we share our faith. Healings will happen. Freedom will come. God’s truth will be revealed in people’s hearts. None of this will happen through power that we generate, it will happen as God’s Spirit moves in power in the lives of people around us.

Notice the pattern here in Acts, that we also should follow. They were told to abide (wait) in God’s presence, where they would be empowered by the Holy Spirit to then go out and share their faith with others. As they went the Holy Spirit would powerfully work around them.

Where are you seeing God’s power at work in those around you at the moment? – If it is not obvious to you, maybe pray that God would give you insight into that. Maybe spend some time abiding in God’s presence and allowing God’s Spirit to empower you afresh.

God prepares us to share our faith as we pray. As you pray, remember the 5 P’s: Presence, Passion, Perspective, Purpose and Power. May God empower us all to impact the world around us.