**St Martins C3 – March 13, 2022**

**Called to be…imparters of God’s life**

**Sermon Summary:**

Consider a time when you were entrusted with something important for the first time. How did it feel? A little excited and a little scared at the same time? The reason for this is that we are adjusting to the responsibility of handling something precious. It is the same attitude that we ought to have when handling the responsibility of prayer.

**2 Corinthians 4:7**

*“But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us.”*

We, like Paul, are ordinary people on the outside. We are just human, with an imperfect body and quirks in our personality. But insider this “clay pot” there is a treasure. The treasure if the Holy Spirit living inside us. With the Holy Spirit, comes the treasure of God’s life that we can share with others. An example of this is Peter in Acts 3:

**Acts 3:6**

*Then Peter said, “Silver or gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk.”*

Peter took the opportunity to share the life of God within him with the lame beggar. Likewise, when we pray for someone else we can take and every day interaction and create a holy moment, where God is present and releases His life to someone else.

1. **When we pray for others God’s goodness is released.**

We may not know what God is going to do, but we know that God will do something good, because God is a good God and His work is a good work. Therefore, be confident as you pray that God will bring a revelation, a healing, freedom or empowerment to the other person. (John 10:10)

1. **They will be blessed, and you will be blessed as well.**

When we pray for others, there is absolutely nothing to lose and everything to be gained. We will be drained from the experience. It is more likely to energise us. (Eph 3: 14-19)

1. **You will connect with who God has called you to be.**

God created you contain and pass on His life, so when you pray for others, there will be a connection with your true identity as a child of God.

3 Simple starting prayers

* ***“Lord, impart your life.”***
* ***“Come Holy Spirit”***
* ***“Lord, come and reveal yourself”***

If we keep our prayers, simple and life-giving, God will surprise us with what He will do through His Holy Spirit as we pray. Expect the unexpected.

My encouragement to you to is to keep praying for those around. If you are not doing that yet, try just asking the question:*“Would you like me to pray about that for you.”*

Let’s be imparters of God’s life to each other and the world.

**Suggested Connect Group Discussion Questions:**

*What has stood out to you in this series and why?*

*Are you nervous about praying for other people and if so what are you nervous about?*

*Has any of the points we covered in this message helped with some of that potential nervousness?*

*What assurances does the Bible give us about God’s support for us when we are praying for others?*

*What are some of the good things that God happen when we pray for someone else?*

*What opportunities might you have in this coming week to offer prayer to someone else?*

**Monday’s Devotion – Stay Connected**

**John 15:5**

*“I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.”*

What does Jesus mean, when he says, *“apart from me you can do nothing?”* Surely it is possible to leave God out of our lives and still accomplish a lot. Plenty of people who don’t know Christ do. There is obviously an important context needed here. That context is the Kingdom of God. We will not accomplish anything for God’s Kingdom on our own, we need to stay connected with the King.

This week is a review of the series we have been in over the last six weeks. Where we started six weeks ago, was seeing our need to be pursuers of God’s presence. It is in God’s presence that we encounter God for who He truly is. It is in His presence that we are challenged and changed. It is in His presence that we are empowered and equipped to bring His Kingdom.

The illustration Jesus uses here of a vine makes the point well. A vine can have a very long reach, but the life of the vine is dependent on staying connected to the root system. Likewise, we need to take time every day and still our hearts before God. Seek God’s presence and be aware of His Spirit indwelling us. Presence based praying is so important, because it is from this place of awareness God’s life flows to every other part of our lives and ministry. So, let’s stay connected to the vine (Christ), because He is our source of Spiritual life.

**Tuesday’s Devotion – Stay Holy**

**Isaiah 6:5**

*“Woe to me!” I cried. “I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the Lord Almighty.”*

Our holiness comes from encountering God’s Holiness. The primary attribute of God is that He is Holy. So, when we seek God and come into an awareness of His presence, we will encounter His Holiness. When that happens, our sin or our unholiness is exposed and we are fully reliant on God who is Holy to make us Holy. This was Isaiah’s experience which we read about here in Isaiah 6; however, it is also what God wants each of us to experience.

Without Christ’s redeeming influence in our lives, we know that we will never measure up to God’s standards. We may try on our own, to make ourselves holy, but it just won’t work. Holiness can only come from God.

Holiness is vital, because our sin will corrupt our lives and what God has called us to do, if we don’t deal with it. God will always work on our character so that we are prepared for our calling. So, let’s not push back against this process, but embrace it. Let us allow God to purify what needs to be purified, so we will be ready to partner with Him in extending His Kingdom.

**Wednesday’s Devotion – Stay Focused**

**Ephesians 5:6-11**

*For once you were full of darkness, but now you have light from the Lord. So live as people of light!**For this light within you produces only what is good and right and true.* *Carefully determine what pleases the Lord. Take no part in the worthless deeds of evil and darkness; instead, expose them.*

When we stay connected to God and He helps us become the Holy people He has called us to be, we will become more aware of what is of God and what isn’t in the world around us. The Bible refers to this awareness as discernment. God’s Spirit in us is attracted to righteousness and God’s good work and grieved by sin and that which is opposing the work of God. Paul’s encouragement here is for us to listen to that discerning voice of God’s Spirit within us and stay true to what is right. When we do this, we will expose that which is in our culture that is not of God. So, let us stay focused and strengthen our discernment muscles, so we are able to bring more of God’s light to the world around us that is living in darkness.

Do we have the right to do this? – Absolutely! We live in a culture that is seeking to shut out the truth of the gospel, but God has given us authority over the evil forces lurking in the background of our culture and the lives of those around us. So, let us discern what is really going on spiritually around us and pray and act with authority and clarity, so that God’s Kingdom is extended.

**Thursday’s Devotion – Share God’s Word**

**Acts 2:40-41**

*Then Peter continued preaching for a long time, strongly urging all his listeners, “Save yourselves from this crooked generation!”*

*Those who believed what Peter said were baptized and added to the church that day—about 3,000 in all.*

The truth of the gospel is powerful and life-changing. Those who listen to it with open hearts will respond with repentance and faith. It is in the truth of the gospel where we put our confidence. It’s not our words that will make a difference, but God’s word.

The verses above are at the end of Peter’s sermon to those in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost. Peter was bringing a new message and a true message that people listening needed to hear. Many in Jerusalem at the time would have thought that they already knew the truth and were living their lives in line with that, but they were deceived and needed to hear a new word from God that cut through their current thinking and brought needed truth and understanding. In many ways Peter’s words were prophetic, in that they were God’s word for those people for that time to grasp the truth of the gospel.

Like Peter, we need to be the prophetic voice to our culture. We need God’s wisdom, whenever we have the opportunity, to speak God’s truth in a way that cuts through the distorted voices around us and bring God’s gospel revelation in a relevant way to those we interact with each day.

**Friday’s Devotion – Share God’s Life**

**Matthew 10:8***“Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons. Freely you have received; freely give.”*

The point Jesus is making here is that God’s Kingdom has brought freedom, healing and life to you through grace, therefore, extend that same grace to others, by sharing God’s life which you have received with them. “Freely you have received, freely give.”

God’s ultimate goal is to bring His Kingdom to everyone in the world. He is equipping us and seeking to partner with us to do exactly that. Therefore, we stay connected, holy and focused, because He is preparing us for Kingdom work.

Yesterday we looked at how this is possible through sharing God’s word with others. This is an important part of bringing God’s Kingdom to the world around us, but it isn’t the only way. Another powerful way to minister to others is through worship and prayer.

I went to Bible College with a guy that was converted primarily through listening to worship songs and trying to figure out why they were so powerfully impacting him? The presence of God makes a difference.

We are carriers of God’s presence and power because of God’s Spirit which lives in each of us. As we pray over our families and our city and as we take opportunities to pray for those around us in person, may God’s presence and power draw people to Himself and transform their lives forever.