

**Preaching Christ....
...by the power of the Holy Spirit
...and the authority of the Word of God**

Date: 20 February 2022
Services: *Across the Diocese*
Series: Year of provocation
Reading: Hebrews 10:24
Title: Year of stirring up

Bible reading – Hebrews 10:19-25

¹⁹Therefore, brothers and sisters, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, ²⁰by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body, ²¹and since we have a great priest over the house of God, ²²let us draw near to God with a sincere heart and with the full assurance that faith brings, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water. ²³Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. ²⁴And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, ²⁵not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

- We are spending February looking at Hebrews 10:19-25
- ... we looked in our first week at the year of drawing near – this exhortation to draw near to God and the freedom we have to do so because Jesus dealt with our sin and wonderfully opened the way to access to God.
- Last week Kevin Simington looked the exhortation to hold firm to the promise we have in Christ... Hold unswervingly to the hope we profess – without sin which entangles or other things which distract us... and without simply slowly going off track in terms of what is true....
- And then today – the year of stirring up... v24 – *Let us consider how may spur one another on towards love and good deed...*
- ... three clear exhortations so far to start the new year...
- **Draw near** to God
- **Hold firm** to what you believe
- And today – **stir up** ... one another to love and good deeds...
- What we are asked to do?
- NOT just to do good works...
- Consider HOW WE MIGHT SPUR one another on to love and good works...
- That is - think it out
- Sort it through... //
- Ikea... flat pak... you have to really put some mind power to it... a puzzle you have to work out... funny thing is if Susan is watching this – she'll be laughing because it was always Susan and our son Philip who loved working those things out... ..
- When was the last time you had a challenge and you couldn't immediately see the way forward and you had to sit down and brainstorm something to find a solution.

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- ‘how am I going to do this’?
- **That** is what we’re asked to do here – to do the hard work of **figuring something out**
- ..how you’re going to solve this **challenge... this issue – this situation**
- ...in **this** instance... give **careful – well-thought through consideration** to **How we might spur one another on...**
- How we might **PROVOKE** one another – that’s **really** the word that’s being used.
- Now – some of us are very good at provoking one another.... For all the **wrong reasons... !!**
- This is not provoking one another to **annoy** someone else...
- This is not provoking one another to do something **wrong** – to lead others **astray**
- No, this is **provoking** one another to do **good**.
- How can we **stimulate** one another – **inspire** one another... **excite** one another... to **love and good deeds...**
- Note the important of ‘**one another**’... he’s not saying ‘**clergy** – this is on you’.. he is not saying – **parish council** – this is your job...
- No – everyone - work out how to do this to ‘**one another**’.
- You’ve heard people say ‘you don’t have to go to church to be a Christian...’ and the answer to that is ‘well, you do’... because when you’re in a relationship with **Jesus Christ**, you’re also placed in a **relationship** with everyone **else** who is in relationship with **Jesus Christ** – and you have a **responsibility** to **everyone else** who is in relationship with **Jesus Christ!**
- You can’t be a true **NT Christian**... without meeting with other Christians.
- There is no such thing in the NT as **lone ranger Christians** – it is not part of the concept...!
- ...we have a **responsibility** to **one another...** ///
- OK – so let’s think about the two things we are provoke one another to do... and then work out how we might do that... ..
- Let’s think about those two things... first

1. **LOVE**

- Not a helpful word – we only have one word for this in the English language... so we can say we love chocolate... I love Susan... yet we would prefer a way to differentiate between the two – because one is more profound than the other!
- How **do** we provoke one another to be people of **love**?
- It’s love like God’s love for us – it’s a **NT** love... which is a **generous, costly, sacrificial love**
- It’s a love which consistently prefers the needs of **others...** before your **own**
- This is such a challenge because we’re so selfish – naturally
- Friends – here is the reality - once you begin to understand and receive God’s love for **YOU**... and **revel** in that love.... Then loving others will flow from that...
- 1 John 4 – *if God so loved us we ought to love one another...*

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- If you understand anything of the nature of his love for you... than you will want to reflect that love to others...
- In fact you'll be so **full** of his love that you won't be able to **help** yourself but love others – **consistently** – **sacrificially** – **generously**... putting the needs of **others** before **yourself**...
- And we help each other know and experience God's deep great love for us, we will become more loving people...
- And

2. Good deeds

- Good deeds **flow** from love... one of the ways love finds expression, is in good deeds...
- This is really **helpful** – to clearly see the role of good deeds in the role of a Christian... //
- In Ephesians 2 – it is clearly explained that we are only saved by God's grace to us through Jesus and NOT by good works... *not by works so that no one can boast*... boast about how good they've been and how deserving they are of God's love...
- You do get that don't you... ? that we're saved by God's **grace** and not by **good deeds**... I'm sure you do....
- But here's the thing about good deeds – they are not **irrelevant**... they **matter** – because we go on to read in Ephesians 2: *We are God's workmanship created in Christ Jesus to do **good works**...*
- You're not **saved BY** good works – they are irrelevant in terms of getting **right** with God – they **cannot** save you – but you are saved **FOR** good works...
- Good works **cannot** save – **cannot** save – cannot save - but now that you're **saved** – **do good works!!**
- We're **created** to do **good** /
- Our whole relationship with Jesus Christ has been brought **about** so that we might **do good works!**
- **What are they?**
- Because the typical way people think of these is helping old ladies across the street.
- But there's lots of other great things to be doing!!
- Mowing someone's lawns
- Doing someone's washing
- Doing someone's ironing or cleaning
- Helping someone at work who's in the middle of a particularly bad week – putting aside your own work to help them...
- Collecting notes for a school mate who is missing school
- Giving – giving to mission – or church – or aid projects – with such sacrifices God is pleased
- Visiting someone who is sad or lonely and doesn't get out much
- Taking a family out who doesn't get out much... take them to the zoo
- Looking out for single people – ensuring they are included in dinner parties or the like – they can often be overlooked

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- Serving on a church roster – that’s a fantastic thing to do
- Making someone you live with a cup of tea – simple... but a blessing
- Unpacking the dishwasher
- Writing an encouraging note to someone
- Praying with somebody
- Making time for your children – carving out one on one time
- Taking in the neighbour’s rubbish bin
- Using your profession to serve others – lawyers, accountants or teachers doing tutoring
- Changing someone’s tyre
- Giving someone a lift
- Going with someone to the doctor
- Sending one of our missionaries a care package – treats that they can’t obtain locally
- Phoning to see how someone is
- Giving iced water out down the street on a hot day
- Welcoming those who are new to church
- Doing someone’s shopping for them
- Endless list
- What more would you add?
- **Endless** number of good things that we can and should be doing for one another..;
- But the point of this exhortation is not to be urging you to do good things... but it is to urge you to consider how to **spur one another on to do good things....**
- That is what we are to put our minds to as a congregation
- how **do** we provoke one another?
- How do we do this?
- A few ideas
- Maybe home groups – or Bible study groups can have some projects you’re working on and in that way provoking one another.. what are we going to do this year as a project to help someone somewhere...
- 7pm – Roseville – built in to life of home groups... one group came to 830 service and served morning tea
- Others – spent an afternoon in a local garden tidying it up for them
- That’s one example of how we might provoke one another
- Maybe we can teams of people just dreaming up things together...
- Or maybe your church or each congregation could have a brainstorming session – we’re going to work out what we can do together to be people who do good deeds...

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- Maybe you have a couple of ideas and you have others who can join in
- A friend – established a new bottled water company – called *Well well well* — where the profits were used to dig wells in 3rd world nations where the water quality was poor...
- Gift day – one day a year – over \$250,000 was collected and used for all sorts of mission and aid projects... just by holding such a day – they were **spurring one another on** to love and good works...
- Or share an idea with another friend – let's do something good together
- Move me
- Inspire me
- Excite me
- Shame me if necessary
- Rebuke me if needed
- ...but take me with you to do good things – whatever it takes – to move one another to love and good deeds.
- I've had Kevin and Sandy Simington staying with me – following the ordination last Saturday... and yesterday Kevin and I walked around Mt Panorama together – something I've been trying to do at least once a week...
- Yesterday with Kevin there with me – I walked faster – and ran part of the track further – because I was doing it with someone else – and he was spurring me on...
- This is the picture here – just trying to do good works by yourself – you run out of steam or ideas – but in the company of someone else – you become a force to reckon with!
- Spur one another on to love and good works...
- Now – finally – I want to ask **why**... why does this come up here...?
- ...in a passage which has been so lofty in talking about Christ and what he's done for us in fulfilling the OT sacrifices... and going through the curtain and making it possible for us to draw near to God in his holy place...
- ... why has it come down to us talking about good deeds?
- What's the relationship?
- Friends – because this is how people who have **drawn near to God** and stand firm in what they believe - are to live...
- In one way – it is simple...
- If you've spent time in the very **presence** of God... speaking to him and listen to him – and you're living consistently in the presence of God... and standing firm... then you just don't go and live the life of an **ordinary person**..
- The idea is that we come and spend time in the presence of God and go on to live **very different lives**... the lives which he has **set us apart to live**...!
- Remember – saved by grace to do good works...
- We've been made perfect

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- We've been made holy
- We've been cleansed
- We've been washed – we read
- We've been saved by grace to do good works
- And this is what we ought to be inspiring one another to do
- Jesus said 'let your light shine before people, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.'
- So when we do good deeds, people will end up giving glory to God in heaven as they ask 'why are you doing this?' and we might have opportunity then to give a reason for the hope we have in Christ.

- 2022 – I've asked you to make it a year of provocation...
- Year of drawing **near** – of revelling in the very presence of God
- Year of **holding firm** – to the hope we profess and not moving aside one way or the other...
- And now I'm asking you to make it a year of **stirring one another up** – be **provocative** with one another... provoke one another **more** and **more** to **love** and **good works**.