

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

Date: 31 July 2022
Services: *Across the diocese*
Series: Sharing Jesus for Life
Title: Sharing
Passage: 2 Corinthians 5:11-21

Outline:

Why share the good news of Jesus?

- 1. Driven by fear**
 - 2. Compelled by love**
 - 3. Commissioned as Christ's ambassadors!**
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- I am going to assume you are watching this on **Sunday 31st July** – even though the video has been uploaded and released much earlier
- So – being Sunday 31st July, ***YESTERDAY*** - Sat 30th – was our diocesan **conference** and the launch of our strategic plan with its catch phrase – ***Sharing Jesus for Life***
- Now – in **faith** – with joyful **expectation** – I'm going say – **it was a great day yesterday!** //
- It was great to see so many there who travelled from **across** the **diocese**... thank you **SO** much for making the effort to be there... thank you for your **active participation** in the **seminars**... thank you to the **strategic planning taskforce** for many meetings in which the plan was **developed** and **honed** – thank you to our seminar presenters – **Kevin Simington, Bec Choi** and **Andrew Thornhill**... and thanks to **Tim Fogo** for all his work coordinating the event with Orange Anglican Grammar //
- My great hope and prayer is that our strategic plan – **carefully implemented and adapted** for each **local context**... will help bring **life giving change** – **refreshment** – **revitalisation** to our diocese – **for Jesus' sake!**
- So with **today's** sermon and the messages over the next **two** Sundays, I'm going to take the **three key words** of the catch phrase – **SHARING / JESUS / LIFE** – **ground** them in **Scripture** – and see if together we can gain a clear **understanding** – and indeed – a deep **JOY** – **about** the **plan** and what it might mean for our **churches** and for us **personally**. ///
- So today... **SHARING**. //
- What does it mean to be about the business of **SHARING** the news of **Jesus**?
- For some of us – the whole concept is – well – **foreign** and **intimidating**
- Some of us feel that religion is an extremely **private business** – and that we have **NO BUSINESS** sharing Jesus with **anyone!**
- Some of us are **apathetic** about such things... I'm happy enough in my relationship with God – but – well – **each to their own** – why should I **bother** someone who doesn't really want to know?
- Some of us are **keen** about **sharing** Jesus – but feel largely **inadequate**... where would we **start?** – what happens when people **object** and ask questions we cannot **answer?** //
- it's **hard**... in an **increasingly secular society**... and where in both **mainstream media** and **social media**, people are more and more are **outspoken against Christians** and **Christianity** –
- we feel a **tension** in **this**... /

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- even if we **long** for others to **know Jesus** – and to know his **forgiveness** and **love** and **welcome** and his **gift of eternal life...** we have no **idea** where to **start...** //
- well – there’s only **so much I’ll be able to cover off** in today’s sermon.... But in the **strategic plan** – in the left-hand **column** – you’ll notice there are some **really small steps** which can be **taken...**
- for example... *developing an invitational culture* – that means getting **better** at inviting others along to things so that inviting others, becomes normal
- or – even just having church services which are **welcoming, engaging** and **compelling** so that when you **DO** invite people – it’s a great **experience** for them!
- and – or – offering regular **courses** for **introducing people** to Jesus... that would be a **wonderful** thing...!
- so – **great** ideas – which **won’t** be a **burden** – won’t weigh **individuals down** – but mean we can work **together** as God’s people in **sharing Jesus!** // **Exciting!** //
- Ok – so now I’ve given a couple of **small examples** – let’s take a step **back** and ask – **WHY>??>**
- Why would we even **want** to share the news of Jesus with others?

And from **2 Corinthians 5:11-21** – here’s where we are heading...

1. Driven by **fear**
2. Compelled by **love**
3. Called to be Christ’s **ambassadors!**

- Frist:

1. DRIVEN BY FEAR

- Now you may ask – what **sort** of **motivation** is that??
- That sounds **threatening** rather than **life-giving...!!**
- Look with me at v10 *Since, then we know what it is to fear the Lord, we try to persuade others...*
- Since we know what it is to **fear** the **Lord**, we try to **persuade** others!
- This fear is not a **covering in the corner** type - **scared stiff...** I describe it as a **reverential awe!!**
- And Paul says – because he has a **reverential awe** of God – he tries to **persuade others....** /
- That makes **sense** doesn’t it? /
- If you believe that there is God who **cares...** before whom everyone is **accountable...** a God who has the power to **separate** those who **love and trust him** from those who **DON’T...** then we ought to be driven to **persuade others...** so that **they** may find life and forgiveness through Jesus as **we** have done...!
- You see – the Bible is **absolutely clear** – people who have **NOT turned** to Jesus... will **not** have **eternal life...**
- In 2 Thessalonians 1 we read that God *will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. ⁹ They will be ...shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might*
- Is that **true??** //
- If you really believe that to be the **case...** than of **course**, you will want to **persuade** people to turn to **Jesus!**
- And of course Jesus himself said that many who call “Lord, Lord” but in the end don’t really want to

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know him or live in **obedience** to him – in the **end** – he will say to them – *away from me – I never knew you!* (see Matthew 7:21-23)

- Is **THAT** true? /
- If you really believe that to be the case, then – you will want to encourage people – many people – who don't **know** the Lord right now – to **know him!** //
- That's why Paul says in our passage *since, then, we know what it is to fear the Lord, we try to persuade others!*
- If you are a **national park warden** and fear the **cliff** – you put up a **fence** or **sign** and **warn others** of the **danger**
- when you're the **on-duty life saver** and fear the **massive seas**, you **close** the **beach** and put up a **sign**
- and when you **fear** the **Lord** – and know the **danger** people who are in who **reject** him – you **warn** them and point them to **safety** ///
- But friends – the Apostle Paul makes it clear that not only are we are driven by **fear**... he says that we are:

2. COMPELLED BY LOVE

- v14 – have a look with me – *For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all...*
- Paul says he will try to persuade others about Jesus –because of the **awesome love** of the Lord Jesus...
- What **love** is **THIS...!!??** that he should lay down his **life** for **all...!** //
- For anyone who turns **back** to **God**... will be considered to have **already** died and been **raised** with **Christ**...!
- That is **simply wonderful!**
- Paul says – we're **compelled** by that love... it **drives** us into **action**... it **urges** us **along**...
- And what's more – we know that he died for all (v15) *that those who died should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.*
- he realises his life is no longer his **own** to do with what he wants...
- it **belongs** to **Jesus** – for **him** to do with what HE wants!
- Back to the **cliff face** and **massive swell** – it's not only our **fear** of someone falling **over** or being **drowned** that **motivates** us... no – our **LOVE** for **people** – **compels** to **urge** people **behind** the **fence** or **out** of the **water** – to **safety** – **security**...
- So here - **compelled** by God's **love** – Paul wants others to know that **same love**.... And therefore, find **life**
- That is why we have cast the catch phrase for our diocesan plan as "**Sharing Jesus for Life**" – for the **glorious reality** is that when we **share Jesus**... others **WILL come** to him – **turn** to him – **run** to him – and find **LIFE**....!! ///
- So can I check in with you again....?
- Are you **convinced** that those who **do not love and trust Jesus** are in a very **serious position**...? //
- Then you'll want to **persuade others**... //
- Are you convinced that **Jesus'** love for us – such great love that he **laid** down his **life** for **us** – **is available** for **ALL** who would **repent and believe**??

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- Then you will want **others** to know that love as **well...!! ////**
- But there is **more** here to convince us to share Jesus with others...

3. CALLED TO BE: CHRIST'S AMBASSADORS

- Jesus laying down his life for us was for a **very specific purpose and outcome....** v19 *God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting people's sins against them.*
- that is – in the words of v21 - *God made him who had no sin (Jesus – perfect – sinless) to be sin for us... Our sin **transferred** to **him**... so that in him we might become the righteousness of God....* Or that we will be made right with him.
- I've shared these verses with you before in another context... but it's no trouble for me to point out again:
- **Our sin** was transferred to **JESUS**
- **And Jesus' rightness-with-God, was transferred to US!!!**
- **Imagine!**
- Because Jesus took my **sin**, I am **right** with God now and for all **eternity!**
- Can we **grasp this!?**
- That means in turn (v17) *if anyone is in Christ, they are a new creation. The old has gone, the new is here!*
- That's **YOU** – if **you** are a Christian.
- **A new creation! /**
- That **old** you – dominated by **YOU**, lived for **YOU**, destined for **death**, has **gone...!**
- The **NEW** you – **you** for whom Christ **died**; **you** who by means of that death have been **relieved** of your **sin**; have been **reconciled** to **God**... you are **NEW!**
- Your life now dominated by **Jesus**... **lived for** Jesus!
- And you have a **new** distinct **role** and **purpose**...
- ...because – have a look with me at the second half of v19 *He has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us!*
- Christ **died** for **you**
- You now **live** for **him**
- And you have been appointed an **ambassador**...
- You **represent** Jesus now
- And in that role, you have one clear message: **"BE RECONCILED TO GOD!"**
- Last week a new ambassador arrived to Australia from the USA – Caroline Kennedy – daughter of the late John F Kennedy.
- Her job? Stay on message. She is to fly the flag for the USA in Australia and give any message President Biden or members of his team commission her to give!
- We are **Christ's ambassadors**... and our clear message from **Jesus is** – 'be **reconciled to God**'. I died and rose to make that possible... now **be reconciled!** //

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- That **neighbour**, that **friend**, that **family member**; that **colleague**, that fellow Rotarian or Lion's club member... .. **you have the best NEWS possible for them....!!**
....That Jesus loves them so much he died for them...!
- **AND** you have an urgent **EXHORTATION** for them... **BE RECONCILED!...**
- That is what the **world** needs to hear... what **Australia** needs to hear... what everyone in **central** and **western NSW** needs to hear... **BE RECONCILED TO GOD!**
- While it's still **possible**... while the invitation is still **open**... **BE RECONCILED...! ///**
- (and of course I'd be mad not say – that if there are any watching today who have **not yet** turned to Jesus to be **reconciled** to him through his **death** and **resurrection** – then **today's** the day to **do** just that!! I urge you, to be reconciled!

- Let me close
- In the diocesan-wide survey we undertook some six weeks back, the second lowest score at 1.9, was on this question: *How effective is your church in terms of seeing new people brought to faith from your local community and enfolded into the life of your church family?*
- We've not been good at this
- When was the last time your church saw someone becoming a brand-new Christian and joining your church and growing in Christ? //
- We want to be **on about** sharing **Jesus**...
- Because we
 - **Fear God** – knowing the serious position people are in if they don't turn to Christ
 - **Love God** – we're blown away that we should be loved so much that by Jesus' death and resurrection – our sins are no longer counted against us, but we're totally reconciled to God. Compelled by that love, we want others to know that love!
 - **Called by God** – to be **Christ's ambassadors**... with once clear message – to urge people to be reconciled to God!

Will you please -

- **Take hold** of the **strategic plan**...
- ...look down the **left-hand column**
- ...and choose **one** or **two** things **listed there** that will contribute to our **becoming** in **Bathurst Diocese**, a people who are **enthusiastic** about – **purposeful** about – **excited** about –

SHARING JESUS FOR LIFE!