



# NEW YEAR SERIES

gracepoint NEW YEAR SERIES 2011

DEVOTIONS

Monday 21 February 2011

## **Christ's last command**

Scripture readings:

*Matthew 28 vs 16-20*

*Mark 16 vs 15-20*

Although evangelism – telling others about God – is something that may seem uncomfortable or frightening for most of us, it is something each person who has encountered Christ is commanded to do. We read in Matthew 28 vs 16-20 that Jesus' parting instruction to His followers was to "go and make disciples of all nations." It is only because those first disciples obeyed that command that you and I ever heard about Christ and that the church exists today. But do you and I take this command as seriously as these early disciples did?

It is interesting to note that when Jesus meets with His disciples this last time, the Scripture tells us that "they worshipped him, but some doubted." Yet, Jesus did not just send those whose faith was strong. He did not just send the articulate or the courageous or those with this spiritual gift of evangelism; He sent them all. Sometimes we may feel as though we are disqualified from telling others because we don't have our lives and our faith all together, or because we aren't great theologians or speakers, but God has called each of us to reach the lost in our sphere of influence. Your particular, unique story of what God has done in you has power, no matter where you may find yourself on your journey with Him. So, will you go and share it with others?

Tuesday 22 February 2011

## **Bearerers of Good News!**

Scripture readings:

*Isaiah 52 vs 6-8*

*Romans 10 vs 13-17*

*Acts 1 vs 8*

Although the mandate to tell others about God is a command, it should not be a burdensome one for us to carry out. After all, we are commanded to share the Gospel, which literally means, “good news”. The message of Christ is the most wonderful news we can ever share with another person: that God loves us and therefore, sent His Son to take on Himself the punishment for our sins so that we can be redeemed, liberated and rescued... so that we can have abundant life in this world and in eternity with God.

When something exciting or wonderful happens in our lives – an engagement, the birth of a child, a promotion or the accomplishment of a goal – we don’t tend to withdraw. At times like these, we tend to go and tell others about our joy and our good news. How much more should we be encouraged to tell others the good news of Jesus Christ? This is news that matters now and for eternity and makes a life and death difference.

Don’t keep the most wonderful story ever told to yourself. Share the Good News with those who need hear it most.

Wednesday 23 February 2011

## Beholding the face of God

Scripture readings:

*Isaiah 6 vs 1-8*

*1 Peter 2 vs 9*

When we truly encounter God... when we have seen Him face to face and experienced His love and transformation in our own lives, there is a sense that we cannot stay silent. A life-changing encounter with the Living God transforms us forever and compels us to share our story with others. Those who have been rescued out of darkness and have been brought into the marvellous light of God are called to declare His praises and to do all they can to seek and reach those who are still living in darkness. When we see the face of God... when we really know and experience His love, His mercy and His desperate desire for the lost, we must be moved into action to help point to and illuminate His face for those who have never gazed upon it.

*“'Not called!' did you say? 'Not heard the call,' I think you should say. Put your ear down to the Bible, and hear Him bid you go and pull sinners out of the fire of sin. Put your ear down to the burdened, agonized heart of humanity, and listen to its pitiful wail for help. Go stand by the gates of hell, and hear the damned entreat you to go to their father's house and bid their brothers and sisters and servants and masters not to come there. Then look Christ in the face -- whose mercy you have professed to obey -- and tell Him whether you will join heart and soul and body and circumstances in the march to publish His mercy to the world.” – William Booth*

Thursday 24 February 2011

## **The need for a redeeming God in a broken world**

Scripture readings:

*2 Corinthians 4 vs 1-18*

*Luke 4 vs 18-19*

*Luke 19 vs 10*

We live in a broken world that is desperate for what only God can offer. Only He can bring hope, redemption and freedom. Only He can truly satisfy. Only He can give true, eternal life. Our calling to tell others about God comes from understanding Who God is and from hearing His cry for the lost. It is also born out of an understanding of the deep and desperate need of those around us.

Jesus said that He came to bind up the broken hearted and set the captives free. He came to seek and save the lost. It cost Him everything to make God's love and salvation available. It is up to us to make it accessible.

Do you really believe that Jesus Christ is the answer to the brokenness, pain and suffering in the world? If you do, this belief must compel you to take His message to those who need to hear it most... to take His light into the darkness, His hope to the hopeless and His forgiveness and redemption to the broken and lost.

Friday 25 February 2011

## **The challenge of telling others**

Scripture readings:

*Ephesians 4 vs 13-16*

Telling others about God usually makes us uncomfortable. It requires courage, wisdom and a willingness to step out of our comfort zones. Therefore, it is a spiritual discipline that grows and challenges us so that we may grow up in our faith to maturity in Christ.

Sometimes, telling others about God is as much about us as it is about the people we are telling. We cannot be responsible for how someone reacts to the message we share, but we are responsible for obeying God's command to make disciples and for being sensitive and obedient to the prompting of the Holy Spirit.

In our faith journey, it is usually the things that are most challenging for us that grow us the most because it is in times that we feel inadequate and out of our depth that we have to trust God the most. When we tell others about God, we also have to continually reflect on and remember what He has done in and for us, and how different our lives are because of Him. This helps us to constantly cultivate gratitude and not to become complacent about the work of God in our lives.

Telling others may not be easy, but it is a great spiritual discipline that strengthens our faith and helps us keep in step with God's Spirit; and while we are being obedient to God and growing our faith, we may also make the biggest and most significant impact on someone's life we can ever make, by introducing them to Jesus.

Saturday 26 February 2011

## **Your story & witness**

Scripture readings:

*Psalm 9 vs 1-2*

*Revelation 12 vs 10-11*

*Matthew 5 vs 14-16*

Your story of what God has done in your life has incredible power and potential. Sometimes we may feel that our stories are not significant because we perhaps did not have an earth-shattering conversion experience or because we don't see a great deal of external evidence of God's hand in our lives, but whatever your story is, God will use it to influence others and to extend His Kingdom if you will let Him.

Even before we share our stories, however, our lives – our actions, our behaviour, our words and our decisions – should speak of the Gospel to those we encounter. We need to make sure that we are living out our witness so that we can be lights in the dark world who point to the Father. We will never be perfect, but we need to ensure that as far as possible, we practise what we preach and that our faith becomes real and practical in our day to day lives.

May others see the love and grace of God in you so that doors will be opened for you to share the reason for the hope and the love that you have. Let people see Christ in you so that you will have opportunities to share your story about how He has transformed your life and set you free.