

Resources for your News

Sunday, 3 December 2017

SEEING YOUR LIFE THROUGH THE LENS OF THE GOSPELS

Mark 13:33-37

1. The coming of the Lord is not just the moment of death, but any moment of grace. Recall unexpected graces – good things that happened when they were not anticipated.
2. Perhaps some of these were moments when you were particularly alert and aware of what was going on in you and around you, and this enabled you to be open to the moment of grace. Recall the contrast with moments when that alertness and awareness were not present.
3. The servants were given charge of the household ‘each with their own job’. Identify with the servants as people given a responsibility within the household of God’s people. What has it been like for you when you have been shown trust in this way by another person? What is it like for you to see yourself trusted in this way by God?
4. Jesus says that what he is saying to his disciples he is saying to all. Have there been times when you have been a messenger of hope to others, encouraging them to wait for a moment of grace. Who have been the ones to encourage you?

John Byrne OSA
Email jbbyrneosa@gmail.com



Sunday, 10 December 2017

SEEING YOUR LIFE THROUGH THE LENS OF THE GOSPELS

Mark 1:1-8

1. John the Baptist is presented as a messenger to prepare the way for Jesus. Who have been messengers to you, preparing the way for the Lord by alerting you to ways in which you could improve your life? To whom have you been such a messenger?
2. John calls the people to repentance (i.e. a change of heart), as a way to a new life. Can you recall times when you had a change of heart, and the change led to new life for you?
3. John baptised people with water as a gesture to mark their change of heart. Sometimes we perform an action to symbolise our change of heart – write a letter, throw away our last cigarettes, etc. Can you remember a symbolic gesture with which you marked a change of heart?

John Byrne OSA
Email jbbyrneosa@gmail.com



Sunday, 17 December 2017

SEEING YOUR LIFE THROUGH THE LENS OF THE GOSPELS

John 1:6-8, 19-28

1. ‘There is one among you whom you do not know’. We can know *about* Jesus but do we *know* him? What helps you to know Jesus in a way that enables you to follow in his footsteps, trusting God as he did, and seeing other people as he did?
2. John the Baptist came to bear witness to Jesus. Who have been the people who have borne witness to you of the good news that God loves you – a friend, a parent, a teacher, etc.? To whom have you borne that witness?
3. John appears in the story as one who had the courage to be himself in the face of loud and aggressive people. He was also a person who knew his own value, did not make exaggerated claims and was content with his mission. Can you recall times when you have been able to be yourself, even in the face of criticism from others?
4. John was ‘the voice of one crying out in the wilderness’ – announcing confidently to those in the wilderness that they must not despair because God’s grace may come to them at any moment. Have you had the experience of being in the wilderness, feeling lost? From whom did you hear a voice that gave you hope? Have you been able to give hope to other people when they were in the wilderness?

John Byrne OSA
Email jbbyrneosa@gmail.com



Sunday, 24 December 2017

SEEING YOUR LIFE THROUGH THE LENS OF THE GOSPELS

Luke 1:26-38

1. We are all favoured ones and God is with us. Sometimes we are more aware of this than others. How have you experienced being a favoured person, one blessed by God? How have you experienced God’s presence? Who has been Gabriel to you – a messenger of good news?
2. ‘Do not be afraid.’ Mary was perplexed by the words of the angel. Perhaps you too have sometimes been perplexed by life’s path and wondered what it all meant. Perhaps at times you have doubted if God was really with you. In your troubled moments who has been an ‘angel’ helping to lower your anxiety?
3. Mary was taken by surprise by the invitation, but she did not tell the angel she was not ready, nor ask him to return later. She was prepared to go with the invitation even though it was not the ‘right moment’. ‘Here I am Lord.’ What invitations have come to you at the ‘wrong time’ and how have you responded?

- Mary's response serves as a model for us – she is one who says 'yes' to what life offers. What is it like for you to say 'yes' to life? Perhaps at this moment in your life you are being invited to say 'Here I am, Lord'?

John Byrne OSA
Email jbyrneosa@gmail.com



Sunday, 31 December 2017

SEEING YOUR LIFE THROUGH THE LENS OF THE GOSPELS

Luke 2:22-40

- What started out as an ordinary day for Joseph and Mary turned out to be a day with an encounter they would remember for a long time. Perhaps you too have had significant encounters on what you expected to be just an ordinary day?
- Simeon gave thanks because his eyes saw the salvation God had prepared. In what ways have you experienced God's salvation in your life: an experience of being loved, or discovering a sense of purpose in life, or being touched by the wonders of creation? Give thanks for those memories.
- Simeon also acknowledged that not all would accept the light that would shine through Jesus, and this rejection would be a cause of pain to Mary. It can be a source of pain to parents, teachers, church ministers, and all who work for others when some reject values, projects, advice which would be for their good. Perhaps a sword has sometimes pierced your soul as well. What has helped you to maintain hope in such times?
- The final sentence speaks of Jesus as one who grew and became strong and was filled with wisdom. What has helped you to grow in wisdom? Have you seen others grow in wisdom through the experience of life? Recall times when you had a sense of growing up in some way. What brought that about? Think also of how you have seen growth in another person.

John Byrne OSA
Email jbyrneosa@gmail.com



Sunday, 7 January 2018

SEEING YOUR LIFE THROUGH THE LENS OF THE GOSPELS

Mark 1:7-11

- John gives an example of humility as a person confident in his own role but not seeking to claim to be more than he is. He is able to acknowledge that Jesus is greater. There is a

freedom in being able to acknowledge the gifts of others without losing a sense of one's own giftedness. Recall times when you were able to do this.

- The baptism of Jesus was an extraordinary religious experience for him. Something happened that was a major step forward for Jesus in coming to know that he was the beloved Son of God. We all have events in our lives that are milestones along the road of discovering who we are. What have been these milestones for you?
- 'You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.' Bring to mind memories of experiences in which you knew you were the beloved (of God or of another person) and that the one who loved you was well pleased. Bring these experiences to mind with gratitude, knowing that the only proper response to love received is thankfulness. Perhaps you have also given that experience to another.
- It is easy to lament the growing secularisation in the world today, but the Spirit of God who spoke loudly to the world in the Christ-event is active today. How can we be open to the new things the Spirit is saying to the Church today?

John Byrne OSA
Email jbyrneosa@gmail.com



Sunday, 14 January 2018

SEEING YOUR LIFE THROUGH THE LENS OF THE GOSPELS

John 1:35-42

- John pointed the disciples towards Jesus as the one they should follow. Remember the people in your life who have pointed you in a new and life-giving direction? Perhaps in some cases this may have involved directing you away from your association with them – e.g., leaving home, changing jobs, etc.
- Jesus invited the disciples to *come and see* how he lived. How have you come to learn how Jesus lived, and what he was looking for in life? How has this attracted you to follow him?
- What is your experience of gathering in small groups to learn to live like Jesus by listening to the gospel together? Where two or three are gathered in his name, Jesus is there in the midst of them.
- Andrew did not keep the good news to himself but invited his brother to join him in following Jesus. What is your experience of receiving, or giving, an invitation to join in some worthwhile venture?

John Byrne OSA
Email jbyrneosa@gmail.com



Sunday, 21 January 2018

Sunday, 28 January 2018

**SEEING YOUR LIFE
THROUGH THE LENS OF THE GOSPELS**

Mark 1:14-20

1. 'The time is fulfilled' – this is a decisive moment in the life of Jesus. His public ministry is about to begin. Recall turning points in your own life when something new happened and with hindsight you can say the time was ripe for it to happen, 'the time was fulfilled'.
2. 'Repent and believe the good news'. Jesus was not preaching a new doctrine, he was proclaiming an event that had already happened. *The time has come*. Jesus called for a change of heart as a response to the good news of the gospel message. A new way of understanding God leads to a conversion in how we relate to God, a change of heart. A growth in awareness of who we are can lead us to a new level of self-confidence, another change of heart. Can you recall times when 'good news' led you to a change of heart?
3. The Spirit of God who was at work in Jesus calling the disciples continues to work in our day and in our lives. That is why the gospel message is one of good news. When has your understanding of the gospel message led you to a different style of life? Who was the Jesus person through whom the call came to you? To whom have you been a Jesus person in this way?

John Byrne OSA
Email jpbyrneosa@gmail.com



**SEEING YOUR LIFE
THROUGH THE LENS OF THE GOSPELS**

Mark 1:21-28

1. In this first chapter Mark familiarises his readers with the type of things Jesus did to proclaim the kingdom, the reign of God. Our passage today touches on two of these, the first being that *'he taught as one having authority'*. It makes a difference when you listen to someone who is clearly speaking from experience and personal knowledge. Remember people who impressed you in this way.
2. Jesus combined teaching with healing, and he drove the evil spirit out of the man. The power of God that worked this wonder through Jesus is also at work in and through us today. When have you been freed from some bad habit?
3. The evil spirit convulsed the man before it left him. The path to liberation can be a painful struggle. If you have found it so, who was the Jesus person that helped you through the struggle to freedom?
4. It is not only individuals but groups that can be struggling with an evil spirit – jealousy, rivalry, malicious gossiping, abuse of power, etc. Sometimes a Jesus person comes into the group and drives out that evil spirit. Have you experienced this? Perhaps you yourself have been this person on some occasion?

John Byrne OSA
Email jpbyrneosa@gmail.com



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