

So three things to cover today.

Speak into this core mission calling. Speak to Dee. Speak into our Giving Appeal.

So let's dive straight into it.

If you were here last week or watched online, you'll know that we grounded our Vision wisdom, our Vision of Hope in the firm foundations of scripture. Let's do the same with this first mark of Mission, and let's start with the WHY question,

WHY do we have this mission calling to proclaim the Good News?

And WHY is the Good News of our faith, about the Kingdom?

Let Jesus tell us WHY.

Luke's Gospel 4:43 ... - 'I must proclaim the good news of the kingdom of God; for I was sent for this purpose.'

And in Mark's Gospel...1:15 **Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God by saying, 'The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; so repent, (change your life's direction and believe in this good news.**

So the reason 'why' we proclaim it, is because Jesus proclaims it.

So what does this '**Kingdom**' look like?

Put very simply... the Kingdom of God is when God's 'will' and God's 'way' reigns sovereign here on earth as in the heavenly realm. When God's peace, shalom and justice are manifest and supreme.

At the heart of this 'good news' (and why it's been a life-giving, life changing truth for millions of people down the centuries), is that anyone of us can participate in this Vision of Kingdom Hope.

All you need to do says Jesus, is repent, 'change the direction of your life' - walk toward the ways of God and believe in this good news. Follow me said Jesus, and you too, can **be the God flavours and God colours of this Kingdom Way, in the world.** Part of this Vision of Hope.

And for me, this was the truth, above all others, that drew me to Jesus Christ and into the Christian faith. I had the life-changing realisation that I, along with all followers of Christ, have the privileged opportunity to play a part in becoming the answer... to the Lord's prayer. The prayer we say every single week in Holy Communion. **"Let Your Kingdom come, let Your will be done here on earth as it is in heaven."**

And as we journey towards the Cross this Lent, its sobering reminder that Jesus was prepared to lose his life for this Kingdom truth.

As I said last week, St Paul, the greatest evangelist in the history of the church. The man who made it his life's work to TELL people the good News understood this calling completely.

In the very last verse of the book of Acts where Paul is living out his final days in Rome, what do we read? We read this... **For the next two years, Paul lived in Rome at his own expense. He welcomed all who visited him, boldly proclaiming *the Kingdom of God* and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ.**

So, back to the original question. WHY do we have this calling?

If this is so central for Jesus and for Paul, then what does this ask of us?

So before we speak to Dee in about 5 mins about her Kingdom endeavours, I want to make two main points today, about this calling to TELL and proclaim.

The first is this.

When it comes to telling people about the Kingdom... our actions will **always, always**, speak louder than our words. We all know this to be true. People can tell you and I their beliefs with as much conviction as they want but if their actions bely their words none of us are persuaded. 1 John 3:18... **“Dear children, let us not love with words but with actions and in truth”.**

The Kingdom of God is a way of life that’s lived out and manifested, and we do this through the attitudes of our hearts and the actions of our lives. Cultivate the fruit of the Spirit in our hearts, so we can bear the fruit in our lives.

Which is why I finished last week’s sermon with these words of Jesus Christ. **Let your *light shine* before others so they may see your good deeds/actions and by this you will glorify your heavenly father.**

Now there’s a quote that speaks into this, and we always re-visit these words our Staff and Vestry away days, and our services. The reason we do it, is to remind ourselves of a very important truth. Listen to these words by Madeleine L’Engle

**We do not draw people to Christ by loudly discrediting what they believe,
by telling them how wrong they are and how right we are.
We draw people to Christ by showing them a light that is so lovely.
that they want with all their hearts to know the source of it.**

We can be as convicted as we want about our faith, and we can tell and proclaim it as loudly as we want... but if our hearts are hard and our spirit self-righteous ... then our words will have a hollow ring. As St Paul so eloquently puts it, **if we have not love, we are but an empty clanging gong.**

Here at St Georges, this is a heartbeat value, our Kaupapa. We want to *“draw people to Christ by showing them a **light that is so lovely**, that they want with all their hearts to know the source of it.”* This is how we want to proclaim the Good News.

My second point is this.

Sometimes all this talk of ‘the kingdom ‘can feel a bit abstract. Disconnected from the nitty gritty of our everyday lives. But this for me, is why the kingdom parables from Jesus are so

encouraging. Jesus gives us an illustration of HOW the transforming kingdom salt and light works. **Matthew 13:31-32**

31 “The Kingdom of Heaven/Kingdom of God is like a mustard seed planted in a field. 32 It is the smallest of all seeds, but it becomes (a very important word) the largest of garden plants; it grows into a tree, and birds come and make nests in its branches.”

Whatever your life situation or circumstance, we need to remember, that the transforming work of Kingdom LOVE is all about sowing little mustard seeds of goodness and hope. But these small seeds that we faithfully sow into our daily endeavours ...can grow into large trees of hope, that provide hospitality, opportunity, and life for those who need it.

And to further emphasise this, Jesus then said **33 “The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed into about sixty pounds of flour until it worked all through the dough.”**

Again, encouraging words from Jesus. The transforming work of Kingdom truth, beauty and goodness is like yeast in the dough of life. It permeates almost unnoticed into all the blood, sweat and tears of our life's challenges and joys.

But it's always at work, it's *always* a transforming presence. And we are called to faithfully sow, to plant, and to water these kingdom seeds of hope.

It's at the very heart of all that St Paul believed. Its why I wanted this as our verse of the day.

58 So, my dear brothers and sisters, be strong and immovable. Always work enthusiastically for the Lord, for you know that nothing you do for Jesus Christ is ever in vain.

There will be times for all of us when our endeavours feel in vain, but the Kingdom truth Jesus gives us, is that these seeds of the Kingdom Way, are always growing in ways you and I may never recognise. We may not ever live to see?

- **How many times can you think of, when someone somewhere, through a kind action, time invested in you, faith shown in you... has significantly impacted the person you are - even changed the direction of your life.** This is certainly true of my life.
- **And how many of these people may not even be aware of how the little mustard seeds they planted in you, have borne fruit in your life?**

Have you, ever witnessed an act of redeeming healing love and NOT felt the presence of God's kingdom Way? As my faith has grown and matured down the years, this is a truth that has become strong and immovable.

Every action that generously **plants a seed of goodness— sows a seed of peace - scatters a seed of justice, waters a seed of forgiveness, is ever a labour in vain.**

All of these have value. All of these have worth. In the here and now, and into the eternal. Because nothing is wasted in the Kingdom of God.

As Paul said to the Church of Corinth... **I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God has been making it grow.** 1 Corinthians 3-6