

Vision Series – 4 Bible studies for Austinmer/Thirroul Growth Groups February 2021

Proverbs 29:18 'Where there is no vision, the people perish' KJB – Do you know Austinmer church's vision statement?

Week of February 1st – Who are we? - His Church to His Glory

Read Matthew 5:13-16 – 'You are the light of the world'

1. Salt and light are no good if they are not used for the purpose for which they are designed. What according to these verses is our purpose as disciples of Jesus?
 - A) as Individuals?
 - B) as a small group?
 - C) as a church?
2. How might we be in danger of not fulfilling our purpose?
3. Take some time to discuss if there are things we could do as a group (try to come up with practical ideas) that might help us to fulfill our purpose this year?
 - A) as Individuals?
 - B) as a small group?
 - C) as a church?

Read Ephesians 3:14-21- 'to him be glory in the church'

1. What does Paul pray for the church in Ephesus – v.16
2. What is the purpose of this request? – v.17a
3. What else does he pray for them? – vv.18-19a
4. What is the purpose of this knowledge? – v.19b
5. What do these final verses suggest the ultimate goal of Paul's prayer is? – vv20-21.
6. Can we make this our prayer?
7. Pray this prayer for each other, your group, your church, and the church worldwide including in Valencia where Jim and Tanya French are serving.
8. Are there things we can do alongside praying that could help this prayer be answered?

Week of February 8th – What drives us? - Being disciples, growing as disciples, making disciples. Do you know Austinmer Church's mission statement and discipleship pathway?

What is helpful/unhelpful about this picture? / where do you think you are on this pathway?

Read 2 Corinthians 5:14-15 – 'For Christ's love compels us'

1. According to these verses what difference does it make to our lives, knowing that Christ loved us so much that he died for us?
2. How does this work out in our lives in practice?

Read John 10:3-4, 7-18 and 27-30 – 'My sheep listen to my voice'

1. V.4 Why do sheep follow their own shepherd?
2. V.12-13 – Why does a man who looks after sheep for money, run away when the wolf comes?
3. V.14,15 What reasons does knowing that Jesus cares for his sheep give us to keep following him?
4. Vv14-16 If Jesus is our shepherd, what's involved in recognising and listening to his voice, so we follow faithfully as disciples?

Read Matthew 7:15, 24-29 – '...like a wise man who built his house on the rock.'

1. What would have amazed the Jewish crowds about these words?
2. This picture of building suggests that there is a process of growing as disciples who listen and follow. What words of Jesus are you struggling to put into practice at the moment?
3. Can you think of anything that might help?
4. Pray for each other that our houses will not fall whatever storms come because we are building our lives on the rock.

Week of February 15th – Unity in diversity...A corporate picture- Using our gifts to love and serve one another

Read John 13:1-17 – “you also should wash one another’s feet.”

1. What do you think Jesus meant when he said this to his disciples?

2. What example are we called to follow when we serve one another? And what does this mean for the attitude in which we serve?

Read Romans 12:1-18 – ‘so in Christ, we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.’

1. V1 (cf.6:13) In what ways might God be calling us to use our own eyes, ears, tongue, hands, feet, physical abilities, to serve Him?

2. V.2 How are we obeying this command (don’t conform, be transformed)?

3. Vv3-8 What gifts do you have? How are you/could you/would you like to be using these for the body? (Take the time here to help each other identify their gifts and where these might match some of the needs of the body we belong to in 2021.

Here are some questions that might guide our thinking:

What are we passionate about?

Where would we really love to serve?

What causes us to hesitate?

What would be needed if we were to volunteer in this area?

4. Pray for our church and that we might know how he is calling us to love and serve one another this year. We are keen to build teams, where people feel genuinely called by God to love and serve, not just fill rosters!

Week of February 22nd – Having the heart of a servant – giving sacrificially.

Read Luke 20:45 – 21:4 ‘she out of her poverty put in all she had to live on.’

1. What are some of the differences between the ministry of the teachers of the law and the gift giving of the wealthy compared with the giving of the widow?
2. When we think about giving and serving are our hearts more closely aligned with the teachers or the widow? Is there anything God might be saying to us through these verses?

Read John 21:15-22 – ‘do you truly love me...? Feed my lambs.’

1. Vv15-17 What was Jesus question, and what was his command to Peter? How did Peter do this? (Acts 2:14, 40-41, 3:19, 4:8-12, 5:3,29,41, 8:14-15,22,25, 9:32-43, 10:9,15,19-21,23,33-36,44,48, 11:2-4,18, 12:5,11, 1 Peter 1:1-2 – 2 Peter 3:17-18.

2. What did Peter’s obedience to this command cost him?

3. Peter, was not just a disciple but an apostle and leader so, if we are not apostles or church leaders is there anything we can learn from these words of Jesus to Peter?

Read Jesus’ prayer in John 17:20-23.

4. If we, like Peter, want to show our love for Jesus, how might his call to feed and take care of his sheep change our attitudes and priorities in our church involvement, change what we choose to do and how we do it?

Here are some examples to consider:

Thanks for those who come prayerfully to church even when its hard to get kids along etc for the sake of encouraging others.

Thanks for those who stay behind after the service to spray the chairs to ensure covid safety of others.

Thanks for those who joyfully go out of their way to clean, sweep extra thoroughly after a church programme in consideration of others who will use the building next.

Thanks for those who carefully take the time to look around for those who seem not to be part of a group during morning tea and choose to go and include them in a conversation.

Other examples you might like to give thanks for and ask God to help us find ways to serve sacrificially with joy.