

Last weekend over the Easter break, we were blessed to have the “Jesus King of Kings” evangelism team come out from Gympie... And it was really good, to be out there at the Amphitheatre on the riverbank, out in the open, sharing the Gospel, for anyone who come along... There was no ‘deep theology’ – just the basics of the gospel.

And on Easter Sunday morning, again, it was great to get together with other churches in town for a combined Easter Sunday Morning Service...

Now,
when it comes to what we do in our worship services, all sorts of churches have different styles, and different focuses... But something that every church needs to consider, is “Who should our preachers, be gearing their messages towards?”

- When I prepare a message, should I be preparing a message for non-believers – should it be a more evangelical message – something that’s designed to present Jesus to someone who doesn’t know Him
; **or**
- Should I be preparing a message for people who **do** know Jesus? Should it be more of a teaching message, that is designed to take current disciples of Jesus (from where they are), and to take them deeper in the knowledge of Christ, and to give training, about how to live, as disciples of Jesus???

And for some churches, this becomes a pretty big discussion – should their messages be more for people who are seeking? Or should they be more for disciples???.

Well, I believe there actually needs to be a time for both, and that's what Jesus did... There were times when Jesus would speak to the crowds – some of them were followers – some not so much, and some were even antagonistic against Him... But then, there were **other** times when Jesus would take his closest disciples aside,, and He'd give them some more 'in-depth' teaching...

And that's what happened in today's Bible reading. Jesus took His disciples away from the crowds, and He shared with them stuff (that wasn't 'geared' for the crowds), but it was stuff that the disciples needed to know...

But, there lay a bit of a problem... – the Disciples didn't understand it (that's not the problem BTW)... The problem was, even though they didn't understand it, they were afraid to admit that they didn't get it... (and so they stayed in the dark)

And I hope that if you ever read something in the Bible, and you don't understand it, don't be afraid to ask someone what it means... Even if you think it might be a 'silly question'...

You know, the only question that's too silly to answer, is the one that's not asked...

And if I ever share something in a message, that you don't understand, please, ask the question... The chances are, you're most probably **not** the only person who doesn't get it...

Sometimes I explain stuff, and it's all very clear in my mind, but what comes out of my mouth, hasn't been clear...

And to those who are listening to this recording, or watching the video, if there's something you don't understand, even if you don't know me, don't be afraid ring me, or send me an email... You can find our contact details at www.bushdisciples.church ... And I **will** reply...

Anyway, Jesus is teaching His disciples about something that's pretty critical – His death and resurrection... But they don't get it, and they're afraid to **admit** that they don't get it, and so they didn't ask...

BTW, you probably noticed in today's reading, the disciples don't come out of it looking very good...

The 12 Apostles – well, they did become great men once they'd been filled with the Holy Spirit, but when they first began following Jesus, they were very ordinary sorts of blokes, and they were very human in all of their faults and failures and sins...

*And this gives **me** a lot of hope,,, because **I'm** very human,,, and I am very aware of my faults and my failures and my sins,,, and how I let Jesus down, over and over; and over again... But I hold on to the hope, that if God could transform those disciples of Jesus, well, there's hope that He'll transform this disciple of Jesus too...*

And there'll be times when **you** will feel that **you're** the worst Christian that ever lived... (Well, let me tell ya: "You're not,

because I think I might be...”),,, But I reckon if we were to meet those original 12 disciples today, they’d say “No, we were much worse than you...”

But it wasn’t always like that: There once was a time, when they thought they were pretty ‘hot stuff’...

As they walked the track to Capernaum, obviously the disciples talked among themselves... And when they arrived and went into the house, Jesus asked them, **“What were you discussing on the way?”**

But they didn’t give Him an answer. They were ashamed to give Him an answer: because they were arguing **with one another, about who was the greatest...**

I don’t even know how to imagine this unfolding:

- I’m a better disciple than you are...
- No you’re not... I am; or maybe

- I’m more humble than you:
- No. You’re nowhere near as humble as me;

- How does one boast about being the greatest????

And I reckon, the reason I find this so hard to imagine,,,, is probably because I know very well, how Jesus answered them:

Even though they didn’t tell Jesus what they’d been talking about, He knew it... (You know you can’t hide anything from

Jesus, hey)... ³⁵ And he sat down and called the twelve..... And He said: "If anyone would be first, he must be last of all and servant of all."

Wow, Jesus has a way of turning everything on its head, doesn't He...

And can you imagine how that would of stung??? They've just been engaged in self-promotion; self-glorification; and big-noting themselves, & Jesus says "If anyone would be first, he must be last of all and servant of all."

Now, I **did** say, I have great difficulty imagining what the disciples must've been saying, but I **don't** have any trouble at all, remembering things that **I've** said, and things that **I've** done, (self-promotion / big-noting myself in various ways) that would cause Jesus to say something like that to me...

You see, Jesus doesn't only cut the great and powerful and mighty down to size – He lifts the lowly up...

The truth here is, spiritual greatness, begins with humble service... And it doesn't only begin with "humble service" – it **continues** with "humble service"...

Some 'so-called' great men of God, expect to be treated like royalty, and they're full of their self-importance... But in Jesus' eyes, the one who is greatest, is the most humble of servants...

In Jesus' eyes, one of the greatest ministries that Robyn and I do, is what I call "flush ministries", and Robyn calls it "the royal flush"... Some of you may not know this, but some days when we come here to use the hall, the first thing we have to do, is get rid of the surprises that's left in the toilets (sometimes on the floor)... And the last thing we do before we leave, is check every toilet, and flush most of them, to make sure we're leaving it better than when we came...

And let me tell you, cleaning up faeces from the floor, and out of toilets that no one could bother to flush, and it's been stewing for a few days before we get here – there's nothing glamorous about that...

And you know what??? In Jesus' eyes, that's some of the most spiritual, greatest work we do – being servants...

Who are the truly great men and women of God??? We might tend to think of :

- The preacher; or
- The evangelist; or
- The prophet...

- The missionary; or
- The Elder; or
- Bishop; or
- Deacon

- Worship leader;
- Christian music artist;
- the pastor of the mega-church; or
- the international Christian speaker...

And we might feel that these are the ones who are spiritually great...

Not necessarily so... The person who serves humbly, is the greatest...

And it's not only about **being** a servant – it's about welcoming the lowly...

Have you ever noticed the way that preachers like to 'name-drop'???

The glamour ministry in Australia at the moment, is 'sports chaplaincy' ... Pastors strive to get these plumb positions ... Where they can 'hob-nob' it with sports celebrities ... And it can be seen by some, as quite a level of 'status' for the pastor – to be a chaplain to the famous ...

And sports chaplains themselves, are often highly sought-after, as speakers at Christian events ... Why??? Because they're pastors to celebrities ... And we all love to hear the stories, about these celebrity sportsmen ...

I know a man with an international ministry, and he loves to name-drop world leaders. And in the photos of his trips overseas, always prominent amongst them, will be photos of a world-leader, closely listening to what he has to say ...

But we don't have to look far away from home to see it:

We see this sort of attitude in our local churches, all the time... If a prominent business person / or a wealthy person in the community / or some kind of celebrity begins coming along to church, “Wow!! Isn’t that amazing”.... But the nobodies don’t attract any great comment at all...

I’m reminded of what James says in His letter: **James 2: 2** My brothers, show no partiality as you hold the faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory. ² For if a man wearing a gold ring and fine clothing comes into your assembly, and a poor man in shabby clothing also comes in, ³ and if you pay attention to the one who wears the fine clothing and say, “You sit here in a good place,” while you say to the poor man, “You stand over there,” or, “Sit down at my feet,” ⁴ have you not then made distinctions among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts? ⁵ Listen, my beloved brothers, has not God chosen those who are poor in the world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom, which he has promised to those who love him? ⁶ But you have dishonoured the poor man.....

You see, the human nature, **craves** “significance”... **And** it gives honour to people of influence...

But Jesus took the example of a tiny, insignificant child – nobody important – somebody who has absolutely nothing to offer... And He said:

37 "Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me, and whoever receives me, receives not me but him who sent me."

There are preachers around today, who preach the message about: "How to become a person of influence"... - And it plays right along with what the flesh craves, because the flesh:

- wants to be important
- wants to be influential
- we want to know people who are important; and
- we want to be known by, people **of** importance...

How about we stop looking for significance, the way the world looks for it... And how about we start seeing significance in the way that Jesus sees it: **"If anyone would be first, he must be last of all and servant of all."**

How about we be **that** sort of church....

How about, when you describe Bush Disciples to somebody,,, how about you tell them:

- this is a church for nobodies (and that you fit right-on-in)...
- How about you tell them, there's no one here, who the world would ever consider "great"
- the pastor is just a simple country preacher

- that he doesn't have any great charisma about him... (has to write his messages out word-for-word, because he can't preach without significant notes)
- the music's pretty basic (especially when the pianists are away, and all we've got is a run-down pastor and his very rudimentary guitar skills)

You feel free, to tell them that:

- the popular people; important people; wealthy people go to the other churches
- Tell them we're a bunch of nobodies... and;
- That our only claim-to-fame, is the Lord Jesus Christ...

We, are nobodies. And yet the Lord Jesus Christ lifts us up and exalts us...

"If anyone would be first, he must be last of all and servant of all."

Let's serve, the most lowly;
Let's welcome, the most insignificant;
Let's seek those who have nothing to offer;
And let's welcome them...
Because when we do this, we welcome Christ...
Let's be that church.

Questions?