**2021 09 05 Living our Faith**

Based on

Proverbs 22:1-23. Psalm 125. James 2:1-17. Mark 7:24-37

Intro: 20 years a TAFE teacher: taught to start lesson preparation with: *“by the end of this lesson the student will be able to …” it is about one thing only* ***-Honesty with ourselves and God****.*

**Living our Faith**

*I do not want this message to be negative, remember and feel that:*

Jesus was anointed with the oil of gladness more than his fellows.[[1]](#footnote-1)

There are many stages of living and many levels of living within the stage of life or conditions at the present time in our lives.

Stages are a bit fixed by time yet within each stage there is our attitudes and emotions and how we grow *or* not, through these circumstances. Two people with a broken leg, or lose a partner or friend and living in similar circumstance can cope in different ways. These differences affect the person’s growth and how they live in the blessings and difficulties to come.

My youngest sister was diagnosed with MS while in her mid-20s. Jan was a ‘what-you-see-is-what-you-get’ girl and was filled with adventure and an easy going way. She had a firm belief in Jesus, it was, as with myself, something that was always there.

She did not become critical or bitter just kept going and was grateful for people. Her and her husband used to joke about things and once when someone criticised them, Peter said – *laughing about what happens helps us cope*. I remember one day I was lifting her into the car and I slipped and we both ended up in the gutter – her on top of me, we both went into a fit of the giggles just as we did as kids around the meal table years ago at home.

Living in our faith, living in the **law of liberty**, there is an instruction in Proverbs 22 that is critical -“be careful who your friends are”[[2]](#footnote-2).

I have seen many people make commitments to Jesus and go back to their old destructive friends.

So how do we understand, feel this expression “be careful?: “

* Do we avoid altogether people whose ways are temptations
* Or do we look at ourselves and know who we are and what our temptations of character are?
* Do we keep away from places, people, things that we know are a problem for us. Things that give us a tingle of exactment for reasons that worry us.

Feed the *close to God reality* in us by – whatever brings us close – Bible, sitting quietly, talking with God or another person.

What do we do? – trust God to keep us strong enough when we connect with these people, places, entertainment or simply keep away from them. We are each different - I can go to a hotel and not be tempted to drink alcohol but the poker machines attract me – so keep totally away from poker machines, lotto etc – not even ‘just one go.’

Do we all recognise that echo of a voice?

Our Lord Jesus was “ a friend of sinners and prostitutes”. He ate at their homes or had contact with them – Jesus knew and loved the hearts of people, people who were lost. He did not fear that he would give way to temptation – he was honest in himself and kept close to God.

There is an anchor promise from God to us individually :”I will not allow you to be tested beyond what you are able to resist but will with temptation provide you with a way of escape that you will be able **to bear** it. – full stop, done. Yet remember one of the temptations that Devil tried out on Jesus “throw yourself from the top of this building – God has promised that you will not be harmed.” Our Lord,s answer “do not tempt the Lord your God”.[[3]](#footnote-3)

Living our faith – will bring us to grow in knowing ourselves -knowing God -yes – that has to happen unless we are using the routine of Bible and church to shield ourselves from God – but as we live in trust in God we must be totally honest with God and learn to know ourselves.

Job at the end of all his troubles said “once I knew about God but now I know God” and David said “ against You … have I sinned and done this evil in Your sight”. Psalm 139 tells us that God’s love for us cannot be escaped from, as does a poem that I love “The Hound of Heaven “ look it up in the modern presentation on Youtube.

## That God knows us completely but we do not fully know and understand ourselves is shows in this statement of fact:

## Likewise, the Spirit also helps our weaknesses: for we do not know how we should pray, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groans too deep for words. And he who searches the hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.[[4]](#footnote-4)

God loved us when we wanted nothing to do with Him, *I have loved You with an everlasting love*. Therefore, with loving kindness I have drawn you[[5]](#footnote-5) with an everlasting love. God loved me so much that He sent His only beloved son so that if I believe in Him I will not perish but I will have everlasting love.[[6]](#footnote-6)

How could we not be honest and open to such a love – we can only come and be still and let a quiet happiness smile go back to God.

Don’t forget the people that we have hurt – ‘sorry’ – **if it is hard** to say it shows up a part of us that we must bring to God and open to God Presence to reveal to us where the blockage in ourselves is. The attempt at reconciliation may be rejected but that is the other person’s issue - not mine – we continue to pray for that person and ask God’s blessings on them.

“Do not be afraid, for I am with you, do not look around, for I your God, I have strengthened you, Indeed, I have helped you, indeed, I upheld/uphold you, with the right hand of My righteousness”.[[7]](#footnote-7)

James 1 puts our attitude straight “ Consider it all joy, my brethren when you encounter various trials, because you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness.” This does not, of course, mean “hey great! I’ve broken my leg Ha Ha” but it does mean I can moan in pain but control myself and my attitude to others. We will not fall of our perch.

Do not throw away your confidence which has a great reward, you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what is promised – the preserving of the soul.[[8]](#footnote-8)

In the record of Jesus’ and Syrophoenician women’s daughters healing. Jesus makes what sounds like a harsh statement – “It is not right to take the children’s bread and feed it to the dogs”. The term dogs has always sounded wrong to me. Jesus would not call someone for whom the Father loved, whom he was to die for, a ‘dog’. Jesus had been taking away the divisions between Jews and Gentiles, and this is one more part of this re-education that there is now no race prejudice in God.

The understanding is in the word the Lord used for “dog’ it was not the word used for the street scavengers – who would eat the bodies thrown into the rubbish valley “Gehenna’. The word was that used for the loved house dog, probably feed by the master and was played with by the children. The look on his face would not be a scowl but perhaps a tender smile and a softness in his eyes.

My focus is on being aware of ourselves and honest with ourselves and God. I have not made a list of things like gossip, lying etc but have emphasised the base of honesty between God and our own self.

“Be still and know that I am God”[[9]](#footnote-9). A girl sitting still while her hair is being plaited and if she is still and quiet something is happening she is changing it is not nothing time. After watching the Voice the other night one singer’s voice was in my head and a song invented itself – I have lost it now but one line stays:

“Hiding from God -in a wall of glass”.

Do we think, feel that these words from James apply to everyone else but cannot take them into ourselves. “speak and act as those who are going to be judged under the “law of liberty”[[10]](#footnote-10) and have the peace in experiencing “Mercy triumphs over judgement”.

What the teachings of Christ, the gospel tells us is the **law** **of** **liberty** because we are told to live according to who we are by that new birth. We are free to be ourselves. This is liberating because our inner person rejoices to be the things we "see" in God's Word

Because the ceremonial **law** has been fulfilled by Christ, James speaks of the "**law** **of** **liberty**," because the ceremonial **law** has been fulfilled by Christ

Imagine the great hall of God, the judgement seat and the area surrounded by angels beyond measure. Imagine that you are the only person standing in the centre of this great eternal space – just you, just one person – how do you feel!

**We will know that we are Safe and loved and accepted -** if our name is written in the Jesus’ (the Lambs) book of life.[[11]](#footnote-11)

**Today is the day of salvation.**

1. Hebrews 1:9 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Proverbs 22:24,25. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Matthew 4:7 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Romans 8:26 [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Jeremiah 31:3 [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. John 3:16 [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Isaiah 41:10 Literal Standard Version [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Hebrews 10:35-39 [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Psalm 46:10 [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. James 1:25. 2:12. John 8:31,32 [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Revelation. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)