

ONLINE SERVICE

during COVID-19

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20 September 2020

Welcome and Notices

Amanda Fairs
viola

Call to Worship

Prayer of Invocation

Young at Heart
Christine Bradbeer

Bible Reading: Mark 1:1-15
Sonya Rutherford

Great Texts of the Bible #7
the time has come

Prayers of Intercession
and
The Lord's Prayer

Benediction



NOTICES

20 September 2020

Wednesday 23 September 1.30 pm Sweet Hour of Prayer
Sunday 27 September 11 am Great Texts of the Bible #8.

For your prayers this week:

Congregational member:
Manfred and Nola RICHTER.

and



Kevin & June MURRAY.

Kevin is the National Director of the APWM and based in Sydney.

MEMBERS who wish to continue their freewill offerings may use the banking details at the bottom of this page or post to our Treasurer, Vic Ansell,

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BSB: 013-328. Account number: 2970 40694

GARDENIA ST. PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH BLACKBURN

20 September 2020



And a voice came from heaven,
"You are my own dear Son. I am
pleased with you"

Mark 1:15

WELCOME



Killings by the police and unknown armed individuals remained rampant as the government's violent "war on drugs" reached its fourth year. The International Criminal Court (ICC) continued its preliminary examination of possible crimes under international law committed in the country. Human rights defenders critical of the government were increasingly harassed and vilified. The prevailing climate of impunity fuelled an increase in killings of activists for their political views. .

Amnesty International 2019

Several churches and Christian organisations in the Philippines have been labelled "communist fronts" in a security briefing delivered by the Defence Secretary. The briefing came the same day that religious leaders demonstrated against the silencing of government critics in Manila. The accusations leave churches and groups at risk of being targeted for attacks or false accusations of inciting rebellion.

An Open Doors persecution researcher said, "Activists and priest, but also church structures, may become the target of drive-by shootings, as is already happening every now and then. Investigations into these attacks are patchy at best. This may serve as an encouragement for more attacks with even more impunity."

One of the groups accused was the Protestant National Council of Churches, which represents 12 million people in the country. The Council has been a vocal critic of the government's violent tactics in its war against drugs in the country.

Despite the accusations, the council, and the Christians it represents, are determined to follow and share Jesus, no matter the cost. A spokesperson said, "We will remain resolute in our prophetic witness and service to the people even in the midst of shrinking democratic space and impunity."

Please continue to pray for the church in the Philippines
Open Doors 2020

Great Texts of the Bible #7 Mark 1:1-15

Sermon
Notes

Jesus lived and died during the reigns of the Roman Emperors Augustus and Tiberius. Both these men were hailed as 'gods'.

We know this from inscriptions on coins, but also from the *Priene Calendar Inscription*. This declares Augustus to be 'Son of a God' and proclaims the 'Good News' of the *peace* and *salvation* the Emperor created. Yes, really. The Roman Peace he created, was of course based on male dominance and the massive enslavement of non-citizens.

The Good News, as Mark tells it presents a dramatic alternative. "Jesus is Lord". His message raged across the Roman Empire like wild fire.

It upset the equilibrium of the Roman Peace by holding Caesar accountable to God and creating a whole new sense of belonging for the despised and exploited, especially slaves and women.

The first column of a scroll acted as a title page, blurb and introduction of a modern book. Notice the following from the first column:

1 No ambiguity The author of the anonymous text is believed to be the John Mark mentioned in Acts (12:2). Mark doesn't beat about the bush, but comes straight to the point. He couldn't be clearer about his position.

He is writing about a Jewish man called Jesus. The name means the LORD (YHWH) is Salvation. This person according to Mark, is the long promised 'anointed one', *the Christ*. Even more, in his opinion this Jesus is 'the Son of God', not the Emperor.

To find out why he thinks this one has to read the whole scroll. At 16 chapters it is the shortest Gospel and takes about one and a half hours reading time. Why not try this during COVID iso?

2 Anointed by God. The Jewish hope stretched back to Abraham more than a thousand years previously.

The promise of innumerable descendants like the sand on the seashore. Then the pledge of 'one like unto Moses'. And a descendant of the 'line of David'. The prophets bore witness to an anointed 'servant of YHWH'. This is a strand running through the books of the Old Testament.

In the Old Testament a thing or person could be 'anointed'.

This meant that the object, or the person, was set apart, dedicated for holy or special service. The anointing came to be applied to One anticipated leader, a person who above all others would be anointed to bring about the LORD God's purpose. This *Anointed One* was designated *Messiah* in Hebrew. Translated into Greek this became *Christ*.

At his Baptism a voice declared him to be 'the Son of God' "As he died a Roman said. 'This was the Son of God" (15:39).

3 Time references There has been forewarning that this person would come. The Jewish hope, the promise of the 'seed of Abraham', 'one like unto Moses', a descendant of David', the anointed 'servant of YHWH' is a strand uniting the books of the Old Testament.

Mark loves the word *immediately* and uses it frequently. He does not give us the long blocks of Jesus' teaching that the other Gospels supply. He portrays Jesus in action again and again. It is as if he wanted a movie camera to catch the drama of it all. Mark says the time is now.

So does Jesus (1:15) "The right time has come". Somehow we imagine there will come another time. The time to believe the message is *now*. Mark's urgency is palpable.

4 Turn, and believe. Sin is a blight on human lives. The way of Empire is corrupt and corrupting.

To repent literally means to "change your mind".

It is an amazing ability that we are invited to exercise. We do not have to be driven by what others say, or by our genetic code, or by the habits of a lifetime. We are challenged by Jesus to to change our way of thinking. We are challenged to receive and believe. Mark is fully persuaded.

We too are challenged to read his Message and believe the Good News.. As you read notice the questions people raise.

What is this..? [1:27] Why does he ...? [2:16]

Who is this... [4:41] Isn't he the carpenter...? [6:2]

until mid-way through the Gospel Jesus asks:

Who do people say I am? [8:27] ... King of the Jews? [15:2]

Mocked many times as 'king', haha [15:1ff]. The anointed and beloved 'Son' dies on a cross. Yet for centuries he has been changing the way people think, and what they believe. Let him change your thinking today. Change me too, Lord Jesus.