

SERMON NOTES

SUNDAY 17.11.24

PREACHER: JOSH PLUMB

SHIFTING THE ATMOSPHERE
OF OUR HEARTS

BECOMING CHRISTLIKE

*BEING, **THINKING** & DOING*

Conviction of a Disciple: As we grow into Christlikeness we become increasingly confident of our identity IN Christ, that HE is with us, and therefore we lay aside our old ways of life so we can live in HIM.

OVERVIEW

Jesus is the resurrection and life. This gives us hope for the future, but ALSO gives us a LIVING HOPE right here in the midst of life and all its complexities. This living hope creates a new life where we can leave our old life behind and walk into the new.

ACTION

Step 1: Reflect: What things in our life have we put a FULL STOP on, that in Jesus can find new life?

Step 2: Commit: How can you start embracing a "resurrection worldview" this week, shifting from fear to trust in Jesus' presence and power?

Step 3: Act: Are there "grave clothes" from your old life—thoughts, habits, or behaviours—that you need to let go of? What steps can you take, with Jesus' help, to begin removing them?

THOUGHT

SCRIPTURE: JOHN 11:21-27, 32-44

Can you remember when you were little and you were convinced there was a monster hiding out in your closet OR WORSE under your bed? No matter how strong the fear was, once a mum, dad, grandma, or grandpa walked in, the fear dissipated and we, in the safety of another, could finally rest.

From Moses to the New Testament writers, God reveals his true nature as “I AM”, meaning “I will be what I will be”. And He tells Moses who he will be, YHWH says “I will be with you.”

Jesus is called *Emmanuel* which literally means “God with us.” When we realise that Jesus is with *us* in every circumstance, it rests the atmosphere of our hearts from fear to trust.

In John 11, we read the story of Mary and Martha and their brother Lazarus who has been sick and has now died. Mary and Martha are devastated. Their hearts are broken and this is where Jesus enters the scene. Mary and Martha seem hurt by Jesus’ late arrival and question him on this. Why didn’t he come sooner? Perhaps he could have done something to keep their brother from dying! And yet, this is where Jesus enters. And he does so without bragging or questioning their faith. Instead, he enters into their place of grief and grieves with them. While Jesus met them where they were he also had more plans in store. What had been a sure FULL STOP in the minds of the two sisters, was a mere comma for Jesus. In this passage, Jesus makes one of his seven “I AM” statements recorded in John’s gospel declaring “I AM THE Resurrection and THE Life.” Mary and Martha said they believed in the future resurrection, but only as a future hope. Jesus reveals that in HIM resurrection is a current reality.

However, for them to experience this eternal reality NOW, they had to allow Jesus to enter into their darkest place of brokenness and vulnerability. When Jesus asked the stone covering Lazarus’ grave to be rolled away, at first the sisters objected. It was too smelly, too gross to allow Jesus to enter. But this is precisely what it requires to have our darkest places of brokenness to be healed by Jesus. We have to give him access, trusting that HE truly is who he claims to be: Resurrection AND Life!

In his first letter, Peter says we’ve been given a new birth. A birth into a *living hope* through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. (1 Peter 1:3) Not hopefulness, but a LIVING hope that resides within us. We are being invited to see the whole of our lives - dark places and all - with an eternal, resurrection perspective.

This living hope changes how we walk through trials and suffering. We are being asked to transfer our identity from a full stop worldview to a resurrection worldview in Christ. When we do this, it anchors us into a totally different reality and changes the atmosphere of our heart.

Finally, as performing this incredible act of resurrection, Jesus tells those around Lazarus to begin removing his grave clothes. This is important, because the reality is, we can be walking around in resurrection life and still have bits of our old deathsuit on - patterns of thought, patterns of behaviour that are not suited to our new life in Christ! This is part of the power of living this new life in community. We can help each other identify and remove - through encouragement and prayer together - the old life and walk with each other into the glorious life of resurrection with Jesus.

DISCUSSION

1. What does it mean to allow Jesus into our darkest and most vulnerable places? How have you experienced healing when you've invited Him in?
2. How does the reality of a Living Hope through the resurrection of Jesus change the way we view suffering and trials in our lives?
3. As a Connect Group, how can we lovingly help one another "remove the grave clothes" that still exist from our old selves?

PRAYER

Lord,

As we reflect on this powerful passage from John's Gospel, will you help us hear the invitations from your Spirit. Highlight in our hearts the areas where we are still walking around with grave clothes on. Give us the courage and strength to remove them and help us place our trust in you and in the resurrection life that you have freely made available for us.

Amen.