

St Marc Grenoble
Sunday 14th March 2021 - Mothering Sunday
Psalm 34: 11 - 15
Colossians 3: 12 - 17
John 9: 1 - 7
'Doing as we're told'

PRAY

Good morning, it is great to be with you, both here in church, and online, as we celebrate Mothering Sunday. This morning's service is about love, and relationships, which are important topics on Mothering Sunday.

Our theme today is 'Doing as we're told!' How many of you children always do what their mother's ask them? human beings often don't like rules!

But, if there were no rules in sport, for instance in a game of football, or rugby, then chaos would ensue and, in all probability, people would get seriously hurt.

From the very beginning of the world, God gave us rules for life; not because He wanted to control us, but so that the people He created and loved did not get hurt, or harm each other.

The story of Adam and Eve - tells us that God gave them a beautiful garden to live and work in. He told them they could eat from any of the plants in the garden, except the tree right in the middle - the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, He told them not to touch it; because, if they ate from it, He warned them they would definitely die.

Sure enough, they were led astray by the serpent, disobeyed God, and ate the fruit of that tree. Their idyllic life was ruined and their happy relationship with God was seriously damaged.

You may remember hearing, last week, about Moses, leading the children of Israel out of Egypt (many hundreds of years later), which tells us when they were complaining in the desert, God gave them ten basic rules for living, which we know as the Ten Commandments.

These commandments, or rules, gave them clear instructions for how they were to live - relating to the one God with respect and honour, and how they should behave towards each other; for example, not to commit murder, or not to steal what didn't belong to them. But, sadly, they did not follow God's rules; they made themselves idols (tin gods) to worship, which made God very angry indeed.

Many of the Israelites died as a result of disobeying God's law: and none of the people, who escaped from Egypt, made it to the Promised Land, but died in the desert, their children did reach the promised land.

In our New Testament reading, we heard Paul's instructions to the Christians in Colossae - explaining how to live together with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Caring for each other, forgiving each other and, above all loving each other and sharing the peace of Christ. Doing as we're told, living by these standards of love and forgiveness enables us to share the love of Jesus with those around us.

But, there is still more to a committed Christian life. Jesus invites us to ask Him for healing, and the other things we yearn for in life, but He also requires a response from us - for us to do as we are told.

As we heard in our reading from John's Gospel, when Jesus met the man who'd been born blind, He made mud with his saliva, put it on the man's eyes; then, He told the man to go and wash in the Pool of Siloam (which means 'sent'). It was not until the man did what Jesus told him to do that, we're told, 'He came home, seeing!' What an amazing experience that must have been, both for the man and his family?

I'd mapped out this talk, so far, and was wondering how to continue ... I'd been asking God to show me where to go next when, on Friday night, I received a remarkable story - happening right now - to share with you, which shows what happens, when you do as God tells you.

Julia and I have some friends who work for YWAM (Youth with a Mission) in Scotland. We've known Greg since my first curacy in 2002 - that's over 18 years; and we've known his wife Shawna, whom he met while serving with YWAM, since before they were married.

They've had a remarkable journey, staying with YWAM and joining the leadership team in Scotland. They have a remarkably close relationship with Jesus, and have often been powerfully used in mission.

They've travelled to many parts of the world, together and separately, powerfully mentoring young Christian leaders - often in very difficult situations. They've seen and experienced remarkable healings.

Now, they have three lovely children; live close to their YWAM base, in Scotland, and are entirely funded by missional support from a wide group of people, both in the UK - and America, where Shawna comes from. In recent years their work has focussed largely on developing and mentoring young leaders - especially focussing on prayer, worship and building an amazingly close relationship with God.

We heard from them in November, sharing that God had given them a vision that He wants them to acquire some land in the North of Scotland, and create a sort of occasional community, where they can continue to mentor these young leaders, and model a deeply Christian lifestyle; living in a largely self sufficient, ecologically sustainable way.

They've been pursuing this vision in prayer, and God told them to expect things to happen in the Spring. He told them to start looking for suitable land, but they were not to go into debt - and to keep their current house in West Kilbride - also that they should pay off their mortgage on it. Needless to say they were puzzled, but faithful - because God has already done remarkable things in their lives.

At Christmas, they heard from a supporter in the U.S. that they believed they needed support for a large project; and there was a sum of money, which would be available in the Spring. They continued praying.

Meanwhile, in late January, they heard of a 9 acre holding for sale in Sutherland (very North Scotland!), and went to look at it. They met the owners and built an instant rapport.

After much more prayer, they felt God telling them that, if they felt this was the right decision, they should make an offer for the land. They did! Their offer was, apparently, accepted on 1st March and, on the same

day, a large sum of money arrived from the USA for them.

That money has paid off their mortgage, will pay for the land and all their legal fees, and provide some start up funding for developing the land.

These faithful people heard God's call for this new project. Under His guidance they found the right piece of land. They followed God step by step in prayer. They've paid off the mortgage on their house and are purchasing the land, and are free of debt.

It's remarkable, and only happened, because they listened to what God told them to do - and did it! I thank God for Greg and Shawna's passion for sharing the love of Jesus, for their example and for their faithfulness.

There is no doubt in my mind, that when we do what God tells us to do, remarkable things happen, and we are richly blessed. It often takes a great deal of courage but God blesses our faithfulness.

So, listen to God every day, take time to spend with Him. Seek His guidance for your life and do as He tells you - you will be amazed at where He leads you!

I know that for sure - He brought us here to Grenoble after 8 years of 'retirement' - His surprises never end.

Let's pray ...

Let's Pray