



## **Sunday Worship Service**

19 September 2021 (Pentecost 17)

This time of worship we will join with many members and guests of the Church Christ has built upon his words and deeds. By this, we are able to welcome each other to this gathering. The service is prepared by Isabella Lee (Bible Reading), Robyn Harvey (Prayers of the People), and the music team. We thank them for commitment to all God's works that may bring life to us.

### **OPENING PRAYER: PRAYER OF COMMITMENT**

God of unsearchable mystery and light,  
your weakness is greater than our strength,  
your foolishness brings all our cleverness to nothing,  
your gentleness confounds the power we would claim.

You call first to be last and last to be first,  
servant to be leader and ruler to be underling of all.

Pour into our hearts the wisdom of your Word and Spirit,  
that we may know your purpose and live to your glory.

Amen.

## SONG: KING OF MY HEART

Let the King of my heart  
Be the mountain where I run  
The fountain I drink from  
Oh He is my song

Let the King of my heart  
Be the shadow where I hide  
The ransom for my life  
Oh He is my song

*You are good good oh*

Let the King of my heart  
Be the wind inside my sails  
The anchor in the waves  
Oh He is my song

Let the King of my heart  
Be the fire inside my veins  
The echo of my days  
Oh He is my song

*You are good good oh*

*You're never gonna let  
Never gonna let me down (8 times)*

John Mark McMillan | Sarah McMillan

## RESPONSIVE READING: A PSALM AND AN EPISTLE

**LEAD:** Blessed is the one,  
whose delight is in the law of the LORD  
and on his law he meditate day and night.

Psalm 1:1, 2

**RESPONSE:** The wisdom from the law of the LORD,  
is first pure, then peaceable, gentle,  
open to reason, full mercy and  
good fruits, impartial and sincere.

James 3:17

**L:** Submit yourself therefore to God.

James 4:7

**R:** We who have the wisdom from above,  
are like a tree planted by streams of water  
that yields its fruit in its season,  
and its leaf does not wither.  
In all that you do, you prosper.

Psalm 1:3

**L:** Draw near to God.

**R:** And we draw near to God.

James 4:8

**ALL:** Amen.

## **BIBLE READING ISABELLA LEE**

Gospel Reading: Mark 9:30-37

### **Jesus Again Predicts His Death**

<sup>30</sup> Leaving that region, they traveled through Galilee. Jesus didn't want anyone to know he was there, <sup>31</sup> for he wanted to spend more time with his disciples and teach them. He said to them, "The Son of Man is going to be betrayed into the hands of his enemies. He will be killed, but three days later

he will rise from the dead.”<sup>32</sup> They didn’t understand what he was saying, however, and they were afraid to ask him what he meant.

## **The Greatest in the Kingdom**

<sup>33</sup> After they arrived at Capernaum and settled in a house, Jesus asked his disciples, “What were you discussing out on the road?”<sup>34</sup> But they didn’t answer, because they had been arguing about which of them was the greatest.<sup>35</sup> He sat down, called the twelve disciples over to him, and said, “Whoever wants to be first must take last place and be the servant of everyone else.”

<sup>36</sup> Then he put a little child among them. Taking the child in his arms, he said to them,<sup>37</sup> “Anyone who welcomes a little child like this on my behalf welcomes me, and anyone who welcomes me welcomes not only me but also my Father who sent me.”

Gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

## **HYMN: AMAZING GRACE**

Amazing grace (how sweet the sound)  
that saved a wretch like me!  
I once was lost, but now am found,  
was blind, but now I see.

As grace first taught my heart to fear  
so grace my fears relieved;  
how precious did that grace appear  
the hour I first believed!

Through many dangers, toils and snares  
I have already come:  
God's grace has brought me safe thus far,  
and grace will lead me home.

The Lord has promised good to me,  
his word my hope secures;  
he will my shield and portion be  
as long as life endures.

Words © L. F. Bartlett

## SERMON

### Bible Introduction

Jesus taught again about what it means to follow him – Discipleship and the Way of the Cross. He predicted his soon-to-be status on earth of betrayal and death. Then his resurrection after three days. While the disciples might have dreamt of their positions under the new ruler called Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth, unfortunately they could not understand at all what their master talked about. Though it was the second time for them to be taught, they seemed not to figure out the consequence as they followed the journey that they were taking through Galilee. Jesus, Servant of God, walked with his disciples and taught them about the kingdom that is obvious, emerging in him every single step toward his final and ultimate mission in Jerusalem. Then in another day's end they went arrive at one of fishing villages near the Sea of Galilee, Capernaum. Peter and Andrew could feel home. And Jesus too, because his home Nazareth was in the same region.

Jesus must have heard that his friends, the Twelve were discussing out on their way. They argued about who would sit right next to Jesus if the kingdom comes. They didn't understand what the kingdom of God looks like and who this kingdom belongs to. And they knew their topic of

argument concerned Jesus. Their argument unfolded that which of them was the greatest in Jesus' eye and who would approve it. Jesus spoke to them, "Whoever wants to be first must take last place and be the servant of everyone else." From his characteristic of servanthood, it was not surprising them. But they continued their silence while they were gathering around him in that house.

Jesus broke up the silence by inviting a child found in the household. He welcomed the child in their gathering and then gave an eye-opening lesson, which could transfer their own earthly values to godly ones. He said, "Anyone who welcomes a little child like this on my behalf welcomes me." Then continued, "Anyone who welcomes me welcomes my Father who sent me." Such an enlightening and revealing moment for all twelve and even the child sitting next God, which they never heard or no other teachers and religious leaders taught it like that way. Because young ones in Jesus' time were not counted and viewed as human being. "How dare he welcomes this child among us?", they might have complained. What is this action? And what does his action teach us along the way in our own discipleship?

### Sermon Introduction

Last Monday 13 September I answered a phone call from a man. The call was ringing the church office number so that I assumed that it would be related to a church matter. "How may I help you?", I responded. He asked me to get an emergency aid if we provide. I told him that we would be able to provide some unperishable food like cans and spaghetti noodles that members of the congregation have donated. But he asked meats that we don't have. My excitement to help him disappeared. Then I gave him the contact of Sydney Community Services to ask what he wants. He blessed me then hung up the call. I believed that I did my best in response to what the man requested. But I didn't feel good because I didn't think my response was appropriate not because of providing no meats but because of failing him and of what the Bible taught me one week ago. Christy Kim led the

bible reading from James 2, which says, “If one of you says to them, “Go in peace; keep warm and well fed,” but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it?” I found that during the phone conversation I failed him and my faith because it was not accompanied by relevant action. I would have gone to see him at Woolworths then bought a pack of meat. To be honest, money that I would spend didn’t concern me. But there was a level of fear that what if this man calls again and again to ask money instead of buying him meats. I couldn’t stop thinking about the conversation and my misstep in response to his request. I begged Jesus to give me forgiveness and a second chance. I have been waiting for another phone call from the man. What I trusted is that Sydney Community Services fulfilled whatever the man needed. Hopefully he had some meats and a financial support that he might be eligible to receive. I confess that I failed miserably. May God redeem my ministry and myself.

We, Christian, may all agree that we know the importance of the bible lessons from Jesus Christ and all related events during his ministry but hardly accept it as one’s own experience. I would say that living out the Word of God is a lifetime challenge for us. It includes that we imitate everything or even some aspects of Jesus Christ. What would you imitate from Jesus Christ if you can choose? Which portrait of Jesus would you pursue in your faith journey and how would you flourish it in your life? My answer is that I would imitate Jesus’ servant leadership in my ministry with God’s people and my personal life. I still feel my heart burning when I hear Isaiah speak about the Servant King who gives away his life for all of us, including you and me. He sings (Isaiah 53:6),

“All of us, like sheep, have strayed away.  
We have left God’s paths to follow our own.  
Yet the Lord laid on him  
the sins of us all.”

In the Old Testament witnessing and later all words and actions Jesus demonstrated, he has the strong image as Servant for God and all God's people. He never lost this portrait during his ministry. Though Peter and other disciples misunderstood their master and his earthly mission to rescue all God's creations to its original Mission and Meaning, he spoke and acted like a servant. He took a towel and washed disciples' feet, had always the last seat with sinners and ate with them, and listened to God and received all suffering and death. So that he rose from the dead to let us all live life forever with him. No one knows what it means to be a servant in the kingdom of God. We will never know the meaning of following Jesus Christ who is the Servant, the Redeemer, and the Comforter. But there is always grace for us given by the name of Jesus Christ. The gospel reading today will give us a second chance to focus on Jesus and the meaning of our discipleship. Jesus has grace for his disciples despite the lack of faith in him. His grace has no end and no limit. The grace of Jesus Christ is like four season that has all different forms of weather touching our skins and the constellation overlaid, always there for us all. You may receive when you reach out your hands, and you see when open your eyes. Jesus invites us to join his grace now.

### *Jesus feels empathy with all God's people*

Jesus gives grace to us all by feeling empathy with us. And he never undervalues his people such as their misunderstanding. He understood that misunderstanding is not final consequence but as part of their journey of faith. So Jesus cared for them when the disciples were afraid and silenced themselves in their conversations with him. In the gospel reading, Jesus seems to maintain his role as Servant of God in patiently walking along the way to Capernaum. He awaited a godly moment to unpack what it means to die and rise again and who is the greatest one in his kingdom. Most of all he knew what followed him. He was going to be betrayed by many who he might encounter with. By their misunderstanding, those who he healed, fed, taught and journeyed through were going to put him death. In that sense, what he is able to do was to feel empathy with them. The hands of enemies

will attack the messenger as a religious rebel instead of hearing the message that may free them from all burdens and pressures. Then he awaited to have fulfilled God's will. This was the word from Jesus' mouth, emphasising his role on earth, Servant of God.

“Abba, Father,” he cried out, “everything is possible for you.

Please take this cup of suffering away from me.

Yet I want your will to be done, not mine.”

(Mark 14:36)

Last Sunday, during my sermon sharing, I complained about my frozen shoulder. Then there have been so many responses including wishful prayers, and practical advices including giving exercise instruments. This was all fantastic! What I have received has reaffirmed that this is who truly Boronia Park Uniting Church is: caring, giving and loving. No judgements but only feeling empathy with me as a member of Christ community. And this is what I have received from the congregation since I started my ministry and journey with you all. Whenever and whatever I made mistakes or missteps, you always accept it and give another go. Your words of encouragement come always first and judgemental comments are never found in my ministry. There are always gentle comments to improving it or going another way that I, Seung Jae, am fully me. That characteristics and nature of this congregation have nurtured the life of Boronia Park Uniting Church where all are welcome and feel at home at their very first sight or visit. In that gift and blessings, our young people and families are able to explore their faith in Jesus with many mature fellow Christians among us. In the service of the church, all are becoming a servant like Jesus. Their behaviour has been formed through and by the words and actions of Jesus Christ the Saviour. We can do this because Jesus gives grace to us all every day.

*Jesus joins up with all God's people*

Jesus gives grace to us all by joining up with us, no matter who we are. He chose not to divide by differences but to give his grace equally. What he did was only to welcome and then join up with all God's people in his journey, increasing the kingdom among them. Here Jesus joined his hands with the kid. I don't think he only used the image of child that helps his disciples find the meaning of God's kingdom. Through welcoming the little one who was not counted or viewed as human being in Jesus' time, he proved himself as Servant for All, no matter who they are. He, as Servant of God, was not a power base but a community of all believers, seekers and doubters where he redistributed the power of God to them all. In welcoming the little one, the power and authority of God in Christ sits on both Jesus and the child. Then Jesus called upon the disciples to welcome God's kingdom and the order of God's kingdom that "Whoever wants to be first must take last place and be the servant of everyone else." (v. 35) This "everyone else" means that there is no gap, no boundary, no standards, no norms of this world as considering welcoming our neighbours. We may recall many names from the church and world history, who lived out this call of Jesus Christ in their lives with others. I can recall the name, John Shelby Spong who died last Sunday 12 September, the Episcopal Church's Bishop in America. To make a long story short, he dedicated his life and ministry to advocate all sorts of people who experience marginalised socially and religiously. He lived out the call of Jesus so that as a scholar his theology and the image of God in his thoughts has no limit or bound. Some of my Facebook friends have shared their fond memories when they welcomed him in Sydney, 2007. He was the main keynote speaker of the Common Dream Conference, and I am sure that his speech of solidarity with all marginalised touched my friends and many souls and lives. At the conference, Spong must have delivered what he sought to find from Jesus Christ and his solidarity with all God's people. He had an emphasis on how we should see and live with others in solidarity.

All human beings bear God's image and must be respected for what each person is. Therefore, no external description of one's being, whether based on race, ethnicity, gender or sexual

orientation, can properly be used as the basis for either rejection or discrimination. (A New Christianity for a New World, 1998)

In Spong's theology, both words and actions, Christ's grace comes up first. No limit, no bound and no end. His grace was placed enough for the disciples who misunderstood about discipleship and for the child who was welcomed to join the fellowship of Christ. His grace lacks nothing. His grace is enough for us as we continue our finding of Christ anew this moment. Here, Jesus' saying, "Whoever welcomes me does not welcome me but the one who sent me" sounds very dangerous because its beginning is to welcome the child who represents all who are rejected and discriminated by the world's values. Jesus proclaimed that all who are rejected, Jesus and God are the same. In this image of the kingdom of God, Jesus places himself very last in order to become the servant of all. And you and I belong to this kingdom. You and I are becoming the servant for all in this journey. Thus would you be able to join the kingdom of God? Would you be able to join up with all who are rejected and discriminated in this world? Jesus yesterday, today and tomorrow loves us and calls us to join in him to give grace to the world. You are so indispensable in this kingdom. So let your neighbours be the same. Let Christ's grace give life to you and your neighbours.

## Conclusion

No one doubts Jesus' servanthood. You and I know this well by all bible lessons and many fellow Christian friends lives. But the most challenging task is to accept it and live out like him. In this intersection, we are stuck, struggling our identity as Christian and church's mission as the disciples were afraid and silenced. For them it was their second chance, but they seemed to fail again. There would be another chance for them to hear him predict his death and resurrection. But what the Bible witnesses is that the disciples won't accept the servanthood of Jesus until the Holy Spirit comes burn their hearts for the Lord and all God's people. They just continue their journey, receiving Christ's grace which is enough, no limit and no bound.

As a new season comes and will be gone, the Sun calls this day and the moon and stars prepare the night, from generation to generation all human being live their own life, Jesus is the Sovereign that is not made, only given by God for you and for me, and for many. In him, the true grace available for all can be found and shared. This is a task given to us in our journey of becoming Christ's disciples.

For the kingdom of God  
is not just a lot of talk,  
it is living by God's power. Amen.

## **PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE ROBYN HARVEY**

O God, Lord of the wind and the sea,  
of the mountains and the valleys,  
of the world and of the church:  
in the midst of fear and insecurity  
give us trust and hope in you.

We live in a world  
where the gales of power  
blow strong enough to shake life itself,  
where from the arrogant and the interests of the powerful  
roll the waves of injustice and violence.

We pray for those suffering  
because of their poverty, their ignorance,  
their limitations,  
because of their colour or status, social or sexual.  
We think of your church sailing on a sea  
where the waves of racism, militarism, sexism  
and economic marginalization hurt human life.

Take care of your church and put in it  
a sincere love for those who suffer,  
a clear vision of your will,  
healing, pastoral words for the needy,  
and a valiant, prophetic proclamation  
against those who create violence and pain.

O God, rebuke the uncontrolled wind of terrorism and war.  
Turn it towards peace and human development  
so that in place of lies, truth is strengthened,  
in place of weapons, there are schools for all children,  
in place of luxury, the world adorns itself  
with bread for the hungry  
and life blossoms everywhere.

O God, Lord of the wind and the sea,  
may your strong mercy calm the whole earth.  
In the name of Jesus Christ.

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You are a gracious, loving and healing God, we bring the people of Uruguay, Paraguay and Argentina to your feet today. As the COVID virus is escalating in these countries we pray for all their people of all ages. Give them hope for a healthier future, give them comfort when loved ones leave this earth and give them the peace that we know only you can give all of us in times of disaster. Knowing God be with their politicians – give them wisdom to encourage their people to seek vaccinations and stop the spread of this disease.

In our local cycle of prayer we pray for Alex and Julie as they minister to their people at the Life Congregational Church in Hunters Hill.

We are thankful God that we can finally see our numbers of infections decreasing in NSW. May this give hope to people that normal life may return soon. We pray loving Lord for the families of Australians who have died, shower them with your love and peace and hold them in your arms. We pray for our indigenous people who have been affected by COVID for families who have lost loved ones.

We give thanks for all the nurses, doctors, paramedics, police, defence personnel, pathology workers, testing sites workers and also the cleaners, catering staff and office staff working in our hospitals. Lord never let us take these people for granted but remember that they have families they go home too at the end of their shifts. Give them the strength to carry on to give excellent care to all who are in need.

But there is sunshine in our lives as well. The recent rain allows us to see all the beauty of your creation in the spring blooms growing in our gardens. Just in my garden I delight in seeing the clivias, orchids, iris, pansy's and my May bush is beautiful as well as my spinach. We take pleasure in walking around our streets and seeing messages of hope that people hang on their fences. We laugh at the little villages of decorated spoons that are popping up in so many of our parks and front gardens. We are spending time talking to friends and family on the phone giving each other encouragement. We delight in seeing our young people in our virtual church services. Be with all our young people Lord especially Isabella as she prepares for her final school exam in November. We pray that all our youth will be able to return to school in October.

Yes Lord there is much we are grateful for in our lives. But the most important is that we know you are also with us as we live with all these restrictions. You are feeling the pain of losing a loved one and are giving of your love and peace to those families. You also delight in your creation of this earth which you entrusted to humanity. It is your love and comfort that

constantly sustains us and allows us to be the people of God. May we always bring our prayers of concern, hope and joy to you now and forever. AMEN.

## THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name,

我們在天上的父，  
願人都尊祢的名為聖，  
하늘에 계신 우리 아버지，  
아버지의 이름을 거룩하게 하시며，

your kingdom come,  
your will be done,  
on earth as in heaven.

願祢的國降臨，  
願祢的旨意行在地上，  
如同行在天上。  
아버지의 나라가 오게 하시며，  
아버지의 뜻이 하늘에서와 같이  
땅에서도 이루어지게 하소서.

Give us today our daily bread.

我們日用的飲食 今日賜給我們，  
오늘 우리에게 일용할 양식을 주시고，

Forgive us our sins,  
as we forgive those who sin against us.

免我們的債 如同我們免了人的債  
우리가 우리에게 잘못한 사람을  
용서하여 준 것같이  
우리 죄를 용서하여 주시고，

Save us from the time of trial  
and deliver us from evil.

不叫我們遇見試探，  
救我們脫離兇惡，  
우리를 시험에 빠지지 않게 하시고  
악에서 구하소서.

For the kingdom, the power,  
and the glory are yours  
now and for ever.

因為國度，權柄，榮耀，  
全是祢的，直到永遠。  
나라와 권능과 영광이  
영원히 아버지의 것입니다.

Amen.

## OFFERING AND DEDICATION

The offering will be used for the congregation's continuing mission and ministry in these changing times. Please make your offering through a Bank Deposit or a personal cheque whichever is convenient to you.

**Account Name: Boronia Park Uniting Church**

**BSB: 634-634**

**Account: 100023784**

**Reference: Offering**

**Mail to: Mrs. Robyn Harvey**

**96a Champion Rd. Gladesville NSW 2111**

Please contact Robyn Harvey, Treasurer on 0418 783 290 or  
robyn.49@bigpond.net.au for more information about how to make  
Direct Debit.

## SONG: HERE I AM LORD

I, the Lord of sea and sky, I have heard my people cry.  
All who dwell in dark and sin my hand will save.  
I who made the stars of night, I will make their darkness bright.  
Who will bear my light to them? Whom shall I send?  
*Here I am, Lord; is it I, Lord?*  
*I have heard you calling in the night;*  
*I will go, Lord, if you lead me.*  
*I will hold your people in my heart.*

I, the Lord of snow and rain, I have borne my people's pain;  
I have wept for love of them. They turn away.  
I will break their hearts of stone, give them hearts for love alone.  
I will speak my word to them. Whom shall I send?  
*Here I am, Lord; is it I, Lord? ...*

I, the Lord of wind and flame. I will tend the poor and lame,  
I will set a feast for them. My hand will save.  
Finest bread I will provide till their hearts are satisfied.  
I will give my life to them. Whom shall I send?  
*Here I am, Lord; is it I, Lord? ...*

Daniel Schutte

## BLESSING

Remember one of the secrets of success according to Jesus:  
“If you want to feel great, be willing to come last and to gladly serve others.”

May God give you the faith and love to put this into practice,  
and the humility to permit others to do the same for you.  
Amen!

Depart from your own place of worship  
with restored hopes and renewed enthusiasm.  
And the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,  
the love of God,  
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit,  
will be with you all, today and evermore. Amen!

The Boronia Park Uniting Church communications team who recorded and edited the videos, ensured all the videos ran as they should and designed the invitation and order of service.

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P. Bruce. *Closing Benediction*. Retrieved (13 September 2021) from [www.bruceprewer.com](http://www.bruceprewer.com)

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