

Boronia Park Uniting Church

Sunday 16th January, 2022

Order of Service for Worship prepared by Alan Keast

WELCOME AND CALL TO WORSHIP

My name is Alan Keast and I am one of the lay preachers at Boronia Park Uniting Church. On behalf of the Church Council and our Minister Rev Seungjae Yeon, I welcome you to this online service during our COVID safety worship time.

Should you have a need to speak with a member of our leadership team or Rev Seungjae please note these phone contacts – 0413 837 721 (Mobile) or 02 9809 2215 (Desk). We would love to hear from you and certainly are available to assist you with issues you may wish to discuss and share.

Our worship today will include a bible reading, prayers, music and a message I pray you will be encouraged to share with us.

In this Call to Worship, I will read the normal type and you can respond by reading the lines in bold font.

CALL TO WORSHIP

The earth is the Lord's and everything in it. The world and all its people belong to him.

For he laid the earths foundation on the seas and built it on the ocean depths.

Who may climb the mountain of the Lord? Who may stand in his holy place?

Only those whose hands and hearts are pure, who do not worship idols and never tell lies.

They will receive the Lord's blessing and have a right relationship with God their Saviour.

Such people may seek you and worship in your presence, O God of Jacob.

AMEN.

HYMN – O JESUS I HAVE PROMISED

Our theme today is about obeying, believing and trusting God. Our reading will highlight one instance where Jesus gave directions, which when followed, had a significant and

profound impact on a range of people. As we seek to follow His words and directions, may our obedience also have an impact on the lives of others. Join with us in our first hymn as we sing O Jesus I have Promised.

O Jesus I have promised to serve you to the end
Lord be forever near me, my master and my friend
I shall not fear the battle if you are by my side
Nor wander from the pathway if you will be my guide.

O let me hear you speaking in accents clear and still
Above the storms of passion, the murmurs of self-will
Lord, speak to reassure me, to chasten or control
O speak and make me listen, true guardian of my soul.

Lord let me see your footmarks and in them plant my own
That I may follow boldly and in your strength alone
O guide me, call me, draw me, uphold me to the end
And then in heaven receive me, my Saviour and my friend.

HYMN: JESUS CALLS US O'ER THE TUMULT

Jesus calls us o'er the tumult
of our life's wild, restless sea;
day by day his voice invites me,
saying "Christian, follow me!"

As the first disciples heard it
by the Galilean Lake,
turned from home and toil and kindred,
leaving all for his dear sake.

Jesus calls us from the worship
of the vain world's golden store,

from each idol that would keep us,
saying “Christian, love me more”.

In our joys and in our sorrows,
days of toil and hours of ease,
still he calls, in cares and pleasures,
"Christian, love me more than these.

Jesus calls us! In your mercy,
Saviour, help us hear your call;
give our hearts to your obedience,
serve and love you best of all!

BIBLE READING – JOHN 2:1-11

Jesus Changes Water Into Wine

2 On the third day a wedding took place at Cana in Galilee. Jesus’ mother was there, ² and Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. ³ When the wine was gone, Jesus’ mother said to him, “They have no more wine.”

⁴ “Woman, why do you involve me?” Jesus replied. “My hour has not yet come.”

⁵ His mother said to the servants, “Do whatever he tells you.”

⁶ Nearby stood six stone water jars, the kind used by the Jews for ceremonial washing, each holding from twenty to thirty gallons.

⁷ Jesus said to the servants, “Fill the jars with water”; so they filled them to the brim.

⁸ Then he told them, “Now draw some out and take it to the master of the banquet.”

They did so, ⁹ and the master of the banquet tasted the water that had been turned into wine. He did not realize where it had come from, though the servants who had drawn the water knew. Then he called the bridegroom aside ¹⁰ and said, “Everyone brings out the choice wine first and then the cheaper wine after the guests have had too much to drink; but you have saved the best till now.”

¹¹ What Jesus did here in Cana of Galilee was the first of the signs through which he revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him.

SERMON

In reading from John's gospel we recognise it is different to the other three gospels; it was written last and written to evangelise both Gentiles and Jews and to strengthen the faith of Christians. As John himself says, his purpose was to show **that Jesus of Nazareth was Christ, the Son of God and that believers in him might have eternal life**. This John was NOT John the Baptist, however the writer talks of John the Baptist in the first chapter.

Although our reading is formally from chapter 2 we need to look quickly at a "prologue" of sorts as Chapter 1, before getting into Chapter 2.

John's gospel starts in a dramatic way, by John stating,

"In the beginning was the Word. And the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He existed in the beginning with God. God created everything through him and nothing was created except through him. The Word gave life to everything that was created and his life brought light to everyone. The light shines in the darkness and the darkness can never extinguish it."

John then goes on to talk about John the Baptist and again the light. The author states, *"John himself was not the light; he was simply a witness to tell about the light. The one true light, who gives light to everyone, was coming into the world."*

He goes on, *"But to all who believed him and accepted him, he gave the right to become children of God."*

John the Baptist recognised Jesus arrival as he was baptising others near Bethany, an area east of the Jordan River. John identified Jesus because he saw the Holy Spirit descending on him like a dove.

The chapter ends with Jesus meeting and calling several people to be his disciples. When Andrew brings his brother Simon to meet Jesus, Jesus looks "intently at Simon" and states, *"Your name is Simon, son of John – but you will be called Cephas" (which means "Peter")*.

So before we even get into the reading, we have this monumental opening chapter.

1. The opening verses mirror Moses opening of the book of Genesis – In the beginning and use the same concept that God "spoke" creation.
2. It uses John the Baptist to introduce Jesus just as a host would introduce a main speaker at a conference in modern times. "This is his bio and this is what he is about. "There can be no doubt about the *raison d'être* (the purpose) for Jesus' arrival on earth.
3. It introduces two concepts that exist from Old Testament documents, the **light of the world** and the **lamb of God**. These images are repeated throughout the New Testament in their description of God.

4. It shows Jesus meeting and calling his disciples, and renaming Simon.

If we quickly flicked to John 21 we can read John's stated purpose for his book. ***“But these are written so that you may continue to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing in him you will have life.”***



So we get to Chapter 2; “hurrah” you might say.

If we were in church I could ask people to put their hand up if they have ever HEARD a sermon before about the wedding at Cana and how Jesus turned water into wine. For some, I could ask, “Have you ever preached a sermon on John 2:1-11?”

The common themes relate to either

- the quantity of water turned into wine (120-180 gallons, some 450-680 litres, enough to fill several bathtubs of wine)
- the quality of the wine, (the master of ceremonies told the bridegroom that he had kept the best till last.)
- some people speak of Jesus' reluctance to get involved; and
- others use this as a message showing that Christians can consume alcohol.

It is the FIRST OF SEVEN MIRACLES REFERRED TO IN John's gospel.

This miracle shows Jesus as being a part of a family (his mother was there), part of a local community (being invited to a wedding) and also recognised as a leader of people (“his disciples were also invited”).

The miracle, along with others, reveals the authority and control Jesus has over personal situations and the physical elements.

For your interest, the others are

- *Healing the royal officers son in Capernaum (4:46-54)*
- *Healing the paralytic at Bethsaida (5:1-15)*
- *Feeding the 5000 (6:5-14)*
- *Jesus walking on water (6:16-24) and*
- *Healing the man blind from birth (9:1-7)*
- *The raising of Lazarus (11:1-45).*

But I want to come back to a very small part early in the dilemma.

Do we all know people like Jesus’ mother – very aware of everything that is going on around her AND AN ABSOLUTE CONFIDENCE IN HER SON TO FIX THE PROBLEM?

That may be a bit harsh but it lightens up the message just a little at this point.

Seriously, Mary was conscious of the embarrassment this was going to cause and did know that her son Jesus was God’s Son and capable of anything. Maybe she was aware of his changing lifestyle and movement into ministry? Whichever, she drew his attention to the issue. Jesus responded by indicating his time had not yet come, in one translation it states “that’s not our problem.”

But here we have the essence of the message. Mary tells the servants, “Do whatever he tells you.”

Yes,

DO WHATEVER HE TELLS YOU.

Initially it is a message to the servants at the wedding but today I want it to be a message to each and every one of us.

We should “do whatever he tells us”.

If we follow the message from this reading, then obedience might often bring amazing results. Like the servants, we might not know what was going to occur after they filled the jars with water BUT BY OBEYING Jesus, we put the results in His hands.

It was not their duty to do anything other than what they were told.

Throughout his ministry, Jesus consistently called on his disciples, his closer friends and even the wider public to listen to what he had to say and then do as he told them. It seems that he didn't always tell them what would happen next but relied on their obedience to his instructions. Following Jesus and doing whatever he tells you may not fit into the standard planner and organisational flow chart but evidence shows it works.

But the basis for his ministry with his disciples, his family and the wider community lay in the words from his mother at the wedding in Cana, "Do whatever he tells you."

In my experiences, I have found that when we are seeking God's plan for a coming decision, our decisions are made quite clear, not always a YES but if a NO then a clear NO.

*His second miracle, in John 4 where he healed the official's son, has a striking parallel to the first message. The man had heard of Jesus and when Jesus was near to Cana (where the wedding miracle had occurred) he came to Jesus and begged him to come to Capernaum to heal his son. Jesus replied to the man, **"Go back home. Your son will live."** The gospel goes on to state that the man BELIEVED what Jesus had said and when he was on his journey home his servants ran to greet him to tell him his son was alive and well. The man worked out the fever disappeared at the exact time Jesus had said **"Your son will live."***

We are reminded of the verses from Isaiah where he quotes God.

"My thoughts are nothing like your thoughts," says the Lord. "And my ways are far beyond anything you could imagine. For just as the heavens are higher than the earth, so my ways are higher than your ways and my thoughts higher than your thoughts. The rain and snow come down from the heavens and stay on the ground to water the earth. They cause the grain to grow, producing seed for the farmer and bread for the hungry. It is the same with my word. I send it out, and it always produces fruit. It will accomplish all I want it to, and it will prosper everywhere I send it." (Isaiah 55:8-11)

So my message today is based around Mary's words to the servants at the wedding and echoed in the old hymn Trust and Obey.

The chorus states

*"Trust and obey,
for there's no other way,
to be happy in Jesus,
but to trust and obey."*

For the hosts and guests at the wedding, the result of the servants doing what Jesus told them was staggering. It was beyond the experiences of the master of ceremonies, who could not believe the quality of the wine passed to him by the servants. Whilst he was astonished, consider how the servants must have felt when they heard his conversation with the bridegroom.

They witnessed a miracle on the grandest scale; they knew they had filled the jars with water yet here was the master of ceremonies complimenting the bridegroom on the quality of the wine.

Mother Teresa made many great statements but one I like states, “God does not require that we be successful, only that we be faithful.”

As we look through our gospels we can find numerous examples where Jesus gives commands.

Let’s just look at a few.

1. *All those the Father gives me will come to me and whoever comes to me I will never drive away – John 6:37*
2. *Come follow me and I will make you fishers of men – Matthew 4:19*
3. *Come to me all you who are weary and burdened and I will give you rest – Matthew 11:28*
4. *I will ask the Father and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever – John 14:16*
5. *And if I go to prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am – John 14:3*

You know I like telling the stories of great Christian men and women but I will refrain on this occasion except to encourage you to seek out Christians who have taken God at His word, who have followed the words of Mary and just done whatever they believe God has told them to do. Look at their lives and see what has happened, how the water has turned to wine in their lives.

Finally this weekend, look into you past and pray about your future that you too may follow the words of Mary and “Do what he tells you to do”.

In our lives, if we do what Mary told the servants, God might do a wondrous thing like changing water to wine or He may do a simple thing like helping a crisis resolve in your life.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE – JUSTIN HAN

Gracious God,

You hold both heaven and earth in a single peace. Let the design of your great love shine on the waste of our anger and sorrow, and give peace to your Church, peace among nations, peace in our homes, and peace in our hearts, in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Loving God, we pray for our country and the world in this time of transition and uncertainty. Forgive our selfishness in ignoring the needs of our brothers and sisters. Save us from the arrogance that disregards the opinions of others. Strengthen us to work for

your kingdom of justice. And unite us as a people in the love of freedom and in the cause of righteousness for Christ our Saviour's sake.

We pray for all affected by the coronavirus in Australia and around the world. For the leaders of the nations that they may work together for the common good as the outbreak spreads. May barriers that divide be brought down that bonds of trust may be strengthened to benefit the entire human family.

For public health and government officials in our country. Grant them the strength and will to act swiftly and decisively, with wisdom and compassion in service to all. We pray for those who are sick, especially those with the Corona virus. May they have access to medical care and regain their strength and health; grant them your healing grace. Give strength to all who are caring for loved ones.

Also we pray for healthcare workers, who with hearts of service, stand on the front lines of providing care. Grant them patience, courage, and protection as they put the needs of public safety before their own.

We pray in your name, Amen.

COLLECTION AND DEDICATION

Remind you that please send cheque to the Treasurer or transfer to the church's bank account if you have committed to give a donation for THE 2021 CHRISTMAS BOWL.

Then Boronia Park Uniting Church will collect all your donations and send the amount to ACT FOR PEACE.

Thank you.

Account Name: Boronia Park Uniting Church

BSB: 634-634

Account: 100023784

Reference: Offering OR Christmas Bowl 2021

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.

HYMN: YOUR GRACE STILL AMAZES ME

My faithful father
Enduring friend

Your tender mercy is like a river with no end
It overwhelms me
Covers my sin
Each time I come into your presence
I stand in wonder once again

*Your grace still amazes me
Your love is still a mystery
Each day I fall on my knees
'Cause your grace still amazes me
Your grace still amazes me*

Oh, patient savior
You make me whole
You are the author and the healer of my soul
What can I give you?
Lord, what can I say?
I know there's no way to repay you
Only to offer you my praise

*Your grace still amazes me
Your love is still a mystery
Each day I fall on my knees
'Cause your grace still amazes me
Your grace still amazes me*

It's deeper, it's wider
It's stronger, it's higher
It's deeper, it's wider (it's deeper, it's wider)
It's stronger, it's higher (it's stronger, it's higher)
Than anything my eyes can see

*Your grace still amazes me
Your love is still a mystery
Each day I fall on my knees
'Cause your grace still amazes me
Your grace still amazes me*

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BENEDICTION

**Now may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ,
and the love of God and
the fellowship of the Holy Spirit**

be with all of you this day and forever.

AMEN

CLOSING HYMN

Now unto Him, who is able to keep,

Able to keep you from falling

And present you faultless before the presence of His glory

With exceeding joy.

To the only wise God, our Saviour,

Be glory and majesty, dominion and power

Both now and forever,

AMEN