



St John's Lutheran Church.

4 Clewley Street, Corinda, QLD. 4075.

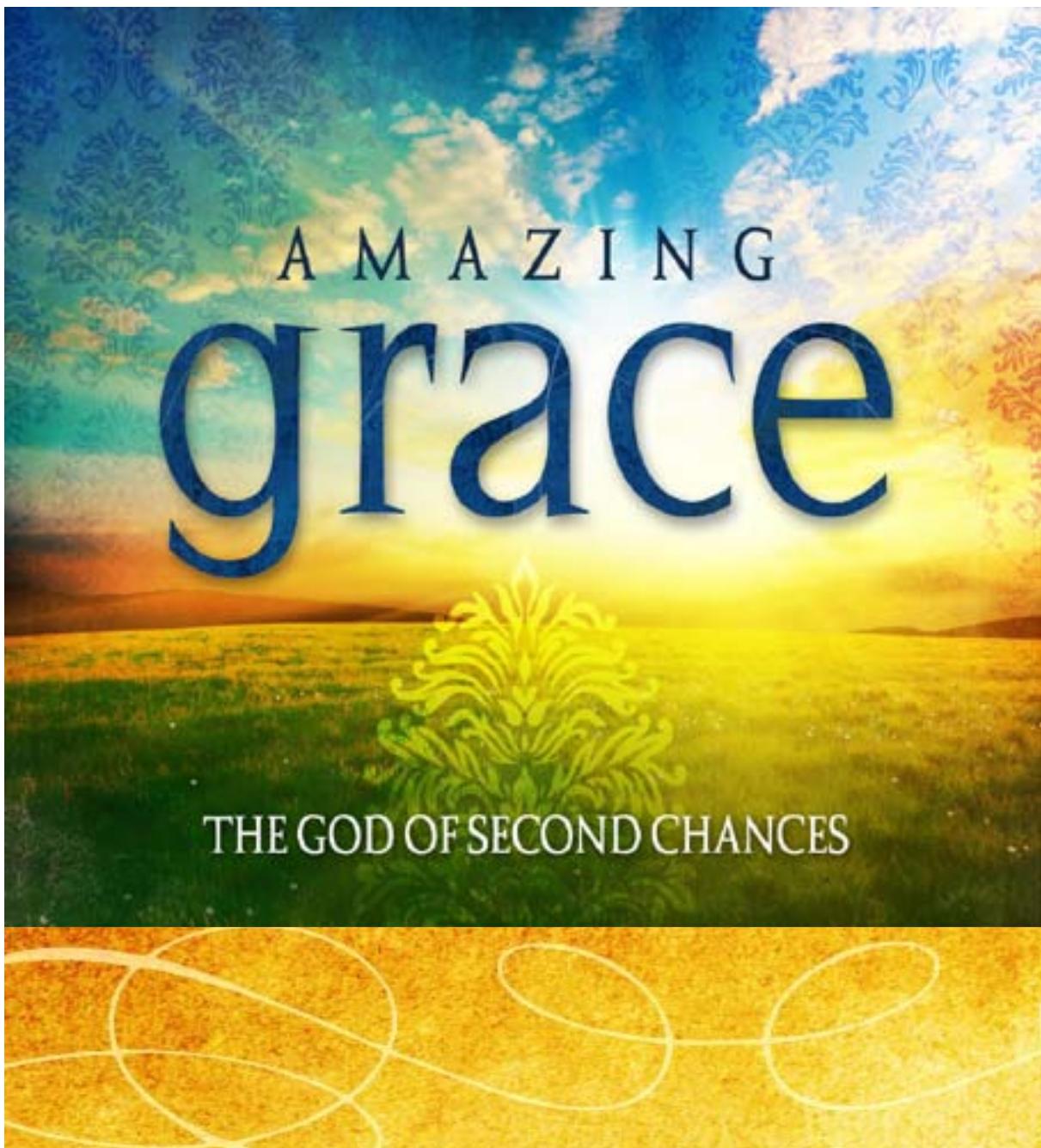
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Together in Christ : Caring - Sharing - Growing.





TITLE : JUSTICE AND GENEROSITY

Text: Matthew 20: 1-15: The Parable of the Workers in the Vineyard

Pastor Michael Jarick

"For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire workers for his vineyard. He agreed to pay them a denarius for the day and sent them into his vineyard.

About nine in the morning he went out and saw others standing in the marketplace doing nothing. He told them, 'You also go and work in my vineyard, and I will pay you whatever is right.' So they went. He went out again about noon and about three in the afternoon and did the same thing. About five in the afternoon he went out and found still others standing around. He asked them, 'Why have you been standing here all day long doing nothing?'

'Because no one has hired us,' they answered.

He said to them, 'You also go and work in my vineyard.'

When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his foreman, 'Call the workers and pay them their wages, beginning with the last ones hired and going on to the first.'

The workers who were hired about five in the afternoon came and each received a denarius. So when those came who were hired first, they expected to receive more. But each one of them also received a denarius. When they received it, they began to grumble against the landowner. 'These who were hired last worked only one hour,' they said, 'and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the work and the heat of the day.'

But he answered one of them, 'I am not being unfair to you, friend. Didn't you agree to work for a denarius? Take your pay and go. I want to give the one who was hired last the same as I gave you. Don't I have the right to do what I want with my own money? Or are you envious because I am generous?'"

Those of a certain age and a sporting disposition may remember how teams were chosen at primary school for games like Red Rover or cricket. Two captains were appointed. They were usually the best at sport and very popular. They would take turns to select from the line in front of them. The first ones picked were the friends of the captain, and were usually pretty good at sport, too. Then came those not quite so co-ordinated. They were still quick and fairly tall, though. Last were the small not very sporty kids who still liked to be involved. The longer you stood there waiting for someone to pick you, the lonelier and more useless you felt. When it was down to the last two, you prayed that you would not be the last one – not even picked.

A similar practice was apparently used in Jesus' day when it came to engaging workers for picking grapes or harvesting grain or building a house. Those wanting work would go to the town square early in the morning and await the arrival of managers looking for workers. Who do you think got chosen first? Inevitably it would be the fittest and strongest.

Getting work was important. It was a matter of survival. There were no unemployment benefits or pensions as we know them. Those who were picked early in the morning knew that by the end of the day they would have a full day's wage to feed them and their family.

For those who were left standing in the town square things were not so certain. Waiting and hoping and praying for some work was nerve wracking. Stand tall, puff your chest





out, and look vigorous! Landowners and others offering work would come and go all day and each time those workers in the square would hope that they would be picked. How frustrating it must have been, knowing that the well-being of their families depended on a stranger, a landowner, who may or may not choose them to do some work and who didn't know or care much about the consequences if they didn't get work.

It's not that the workers in the town square were lazy, in fact, they wanted to work. They stood there all day when they could have given up and gone home. Imagine still standing there 11 hours later and wondering how you are going to tell your family that there is no money for food.

In Jesus' story just as the workers were about to give up hope someone comes along and hires them. They tell themselves that something is better than nothing. Maybe tomorrow they will get invited back if they work hard and impress the boss!

But then the vineyard owner does something strange, something totally unexpected, something beyond their wildest dreams. He gives them a full day's wage, even though they only worked for an hour or so. Hooray! They have got enough money for food for tonight and maybe some for tomorrow!

But not everybody was dancing for joy, were they? Those who had worked hard all day weren't so delighted with the vineyard owner's generosity. If those who only worked about an hour before sunset got a full day's wage, they had imagined what they would get. The landowner explained they were being paid a fair wage for a day's work, exactly as had been agreed.

This kind of generosity is not exactly good work practice. Both trade unions and employers' associations would be crying foul. Such generosity hardly fosters good relations among the workers and between workers and their bosses, either. But this isn't a story about what is fair, just and right. It's a story about generosity that is so strange it is nearly unbelievable.

And Jesus says this is what the kingdom of heaven is like. This is what the generosity of God is like.

The strongest proof of God's generosity is Jesus, beaten, whipped, mocked and nailed to a cross. The Son of God had come from heaven to earth, not because he was looking for a nice place to have a break from heavenly chores or get away from the endless harp music. Jesus was the centre of God's plan that had been put in motion when the first man and woman disobeyed God in the Garden of Eden. God became human, born in a stable, laid in a manger, raised in an out-of-the-way country town, was misunderstood and rejected, falsely accused and wrongly sentenced to die on a cross.

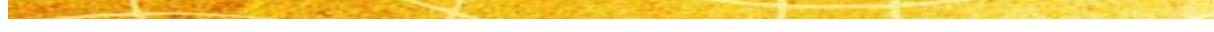
Why? Why did God go to such extremes? Because of his overwhelmingly generous love for each one of us.

There was nothing fair about the way Jesus was treated. There was nothing fair about his trial. How was a totally innocent man executed as a criminal? There is no doubt that the man who could command the wind and waves to stop, who could walk on water and raise the dead could have given his executioners their just desserts. Instead, he prayed, "Father, forgive them. They don't know what they are doing".

In today's Old Testament reading we find Jonah sitting on a hill overlooking Nineveh. He is very unhappy, even angry. Why the long face? After all the people of Nineveh had given up their wicked ways and God had decided not to punish them.

This really offended Jonah's sense of justice. He considered himself a God-fearing man. He always did his best to follow God's ways. There was only one time when he had disobeyed God, and boy did he pay for that one! Three days inside the belly of a whale. What a stink! And now here are the Ninevites, wicked through and through, and they get off scot free. Where is the justice in that?





That day Jonah learnt something about God's generous love, not only for the Ninevites, but also for himself and for all his creation. The Ninevites might have been some of the most perverse people on the face of earth but God's love for them was no less generous than his love for the often cranky and self-righteous Jonah.

Just before our Gospel reading Jesus is asked by Peter, "Lord, if my brother keeps on sinning against me, how many times do I have to forgive him?" Peter suggests seven times. That is the standard teaching of the rabbis of the day and was regarded as being very generous. Jesus is far more generous. His answer implies there is no limit to the number of times that forgiveness is to be given.

That offends our sense of justice, doesn't it? By our human way of reckoning, there must be a limit to the times we forgive another person. There must be a time when we say, "That's it. You've hurt me for the last time. Just watch me give you some of what you deserve". Jesus totally shatters our human standards of fairness and justice by giving each one his love and grace. He doesn't expect us to work for it. He doesn't wait until we deserve it. He sets a new standard for our relationship with others.

In God's kingdom there's more to forgiveness than counting how many times we should forgive. You're safe at six times. Seven is the limit, and after that, forget it, buster!

Let us not forget that God's generosity toward us is totally undeserved and unconditional. It follows that we extend the same kind of generosity toward others. This can be expressed in any number of ways.

- We can be generous in the way we give a person encouragement and a kind word when they are feeling down, even though that person might not be one of our best mates.
- We can be generous in the way we give of our time to help someone going through a rough patch.
- When someone says something that offends us we can be generous in our reaction by putting ourselves in their shoes and considering where their hurt is coming from, rather than by giving as good as we get.
- When we have fallen out with someone or believe we have been unfairly treated we can be generous in our willingness to reach out and make amends and restore friendships.
- When someone really annoys us and gets under our skin we can be generous with our patience and kindness and deal with that person in a way that reflects the generous nature of God.

If you have received this godly generosity you know what a blessing it is. When you were tired and worn out, feeling alone and defeated, and someone took the time to patiently listen to you, and to encourage and help you; what a tremendous blessing that was!

It's nice to talk about generosity in this way and how our lives ought to reflect the generosity of God, but we all know how hard it is to do this. As the workers experienced in the parable, the biggest barriers to generosity are envy and selfishness. It's that part of us that wants to be first, to have our needs met before anyone else's. And this is exactly when we look to the generosity of God to forgive us again, renew us once more and redirect our attitudes to be more like Jesus'.

The Bible often uses a word that encapsulates the incredible generosity of God to each of us – 'grace'. That's what Jesus' parable is all about and that's what Jonah experienced that day outside Nineveh—the grace of God.

The workers who received a full day's wages for only an hour or so of work were delighted and no doubt celebrated the landowner's generosity. This unexpected gift was a source of hope that would bring happiness to their families and trust for a better tomorrow. The generosity of God is what gives us hope when it seems that only grey skies and dark clouds colour our days. It is this hope that allows us to see glimpses of the bright colours and the sunshine of the kingdom of God. Amen.





BULLETIN FOR SIXTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST – 20 SEPTEMBER 2020.

REVISED NEW WORSHIP PLANS

By now you will be aware that we have returned to worship services via Zoom only. This will continue until either restrictions on the number of people attending worship services is eased, or we meet the requirements for an approved Industry Safe COVID plan.

BOOK NOOK

I'd like to review a short book I bought at the "Luther 500" conference a couple of years ago.

TITLE: "Luther Bible 1551" 26 pages

PUBLISHED BY the Australian Lutheran Institute for Theology and Ethics 2015

CONTENT: The first translation of the Bible into German from the original Hebrew and Greek was made by Martin Luther, with the first edition appearing in 1534. The Lohe Memorial Library at the Australian Lutheran College owns the 1551 edition, produced in the workshop of Hans Lufft.

This book reproduces 23 illustrations from the 172 from this edition, including the Creation accounts in Genesis 1-3, the Crossing of the Red Sea, the Book of Jonah, the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse from Revelation, and so on. With each illustration is a brief commentary.

VERDICT: This short book is a delight. It may be casually perused, or used as a stimulation for the imagination, a visual way of entering the biblical text and reflecting on its meaning.

AVAILABLE TO BORROW from Pastor Michael

ANNUAL LEAVE

My week away for annual leave was refreshing and rewarding. I stayed 4 nights at Ballandean. It was still cold enough to light the wood fire every night. Seven wineries were visited. Only 15 bottles of wine were purchased, plus aged sherry and balsamic vinegars. Admirable restraint!

I also had a late celebration of my 60th birthday with my family at the Sunshine Coast. Thanks to Brian for being available while I was away.

FOR REFLECTION

Here are some thoughts for you to consider for the Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost, based on the Gospel, Matthew 20:1-16: "The Parable of the Workers in the Vineyard"

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'When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his foreman, 'Call the workers and pay them their wages, beginning with the last ones hired and going on to the first.'

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'But he answered one of them, 'I am not being unfair to you, friend. Didn't you agree to work for a denarius? Take your pay and go. I want to give the one who was hired last the same as I gave you. Don't I have the right to do what I want with my own money? Or are you envious because I am generous?'

'So the last will be first, and the first will be last.'

- What sort of injustice have you encountered?...
- When have you been treated very generously?...
- How has God been generous to you?...
- What can you thank God for today?...
- How do you deal with envy?...
- What can you do today in response to God's generosity and grace?...
- Prayer: Dear God, you are generous and gracious. Move us away from envy and pride. Help us to treat others as you treat us. Amen.

May the Lord bless and keep you,

Pastor Michael

BEESTING COFFEE MORNINGS – From Joy.

We are again having a coffee morning on Saturday October 3 at 10am, and as we still have a maximum limit of about 14 attendees, you will need to contact me to book your place. Get in quickly - Contact Joy. Mobile 0418 725 894.

ST JOHN'S CHURCH ROSTER

CHURCH CLEANING September 2020.

6 Sept – Lance & Emily.

13 Sept – Smith Family.

20 Sept – Meeri V, Sue C, Hannelore.

27 Sept – Elspeth P, Fay T. OUTSIDE – Tom B.

CHURCH OFFERINGS

We are grateful for your support during this time and would encourage you to continue with your offerings during the coming weeks that we are unable to have services.

Online banking accounts are:

LLL - BSB 704 942 Account Number 52648 Corinda St Johns REG Account

Westpac Banking Corporation BSB 034-087 Account Number 015 808 LCA St Johns.

Blessings to all, Sandra Murray, Treasurer.





Walk the Labyrinth

St John's Lutheran Church
4 Clewley St, Corinda

Friday Sept 18 : 10am - 8.30pm
Saturday Sept 19 : 10am - 8.30pm
(evenings will be candlelit)

for more details

WALK MY WAY

WELL DONE! We have raised nearly \$2460.00 this year and need only \$140.00 more to achieve our goal to help 100 children receive an education in the Nigerian refugee camps. Walk My Way has a facebook page and I believe Joy has linked this to the St John's Facebook page.

<https://www.facebook.com/walkmywayalws/>

You can also check on our fundraising amounts at

<https://doyourownthing.walkmyway.org.au/page/CorindaStJohns2020>

We are still collecting cans and bottles and plastic, so if you have a bulk load let us know and we can probably collect from you.

LIDS FOR KIDS

Unfortunately we are going to have to halt this program. The originators of the idea in Melbourne have been swamped with lids and plastic (hey that's really good that everyone is so concerned) and they are now trying to process what they have. However we also have those politically correct persons who have deemed that the recycled plastic being used for making prosthetic limbs is not healthy (maybe the plastic is diseased!) or suitable for their needs. Amazing!

The Shed Men in Forest Lake now have a whole warehouse full of plastic lids and can take no more.

I have asked my local BCC Member to see if there is a need in our schools for plastic string for 3D printers, and if there is a need, then the next stage is to fundraise to buy a plastic extruder to manufacture the string. The Shed Men have already found they can get the plastic "chipped" into small pieces for the machine but the machine will cost about \$1600.00.

So, at the moment sorry folks, no more lids needed. I will keep you up to date with developments.

PRESERVING BOTTLES AVAILABLE

Karel has a collection of over 50 bottles ranging from small to large, suitable for jams and pickles etc. If anyone is interested please contact Karel. mob : 0408 964 401

this changes
EVERYTHING.





Hi there Sunnis,

Time flies, already school holidays again.

I am sure you are happy about it !!

As we are still under restriction, where we can
and can't be/go is frustrating.

Well, put your thinking caps on,
find things to do, like reading a book,
start raising flowers or vegetables or surprise your parents,
helping them, with chores without complaining.

Look at maps and go on a trip to foreign countries, all from your
livingroom; do something a bit challenging.

Can you come up with something?

If you ever start to feel worried or afraid about it all, do not keep it
to yourself, talk to you parents, teachers or someone you trust.

Don't forget to talk to GOD, He loves and listens to you.
do not be anxious about anything, that is what the Bible tells us;
you can read it in the NT. Philippians 4: Verses 6 and 7.
Sooner or later this will pass and life will get back to normal.
Till next time, keep washing your hands, stay safe, be thankful.

Don't forget: GOD LOVES YOU