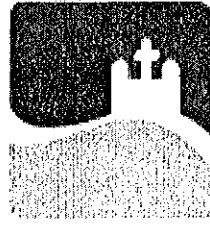


St Annes Ryde
ANGLICAN CHURCH



CGS 17
Term 2 2009

2 Corinthians:

power in weakness (pt 1)



Bible based Discussion Material
prepared by Greg Burke and linked to sermons
preached at St Anne's Ryde Anglican Church

Discussion 1 Gospel treasures

2 Corinthians 4:7-18 (Sermon May 3rd)

1. Jesus says "Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" (Matthew 6:21). What does Paul regard as "treasure" in 2Cor 4:6? Is this treasure to you/us? What factors might make us forget its value?
2. How useful do you find Paul's picture of "treasures in jars of clay" to describe your own experience of life as a follower of Jesus? What does he say is the point of this experience of weakness?
3. Do you think a Christian person should expect to suffer for his/her faith? Give your reasons? How does this passage help us to understand something of the purposes of God in suffering?
4. How does Paul's experience mirror that of Jesus? How does ours?
5. Why do you think Paul paul can say he is hard pressed **BUT NOT** crushed (and the other ... **BUT NOT** ... statements in verses 8-9)? What accounts for his resilience? What gives him hope in his suffering and a sense of purpose?
6. What is the difference between suffering as a Christian and suffering generally (illness etc.)? Does this passage help us as we suffer generally?
7. Imagine our church is linked to an underground church in a country where open Christian faith is illegal and persecuted. We are asked to meet to pray for our brothers and sisters - how would this passage inform our prayers? How would it help us to write an encouraging letter? How would it stop us from sounding trite and condescending?

Discussion 2 Life swallows death

2 Corinthians 5:1-10 (Sermon May 10th)

1. How does your "life journey" mirror Abraham's? Compare this with Paul's description in 2Cor 5:1-10.
2. What does Paul's "tent" image in this passage add to his previous "clay jar" image?
3. What is the difference between groaning and grumbling? What is the content of Paul's groaning? Ours?

4. Read Romans 8:18-27. How does this passage help us to understand our situation and the content of our hope?
5. What is the role of God's Spirit in Romans 8:18-27 and 2Cor 5:1-10 ?
6. A television "preacher" promises that every Christian will enjoy a fulfilled, happy, healthy and successful life. He claims that God wants to bless his people not harm them. How would you advise a person who was influenced by this teaching?
7. Should Christian teaching be 100% positive? What potential dangers are there if it is? What personal challenges does sharing Paul's perspective on verse 8 have for you?
8. "We are justified according to our faith, but judged according to our works". Would you agree or disagree? How does your answer take account of 1Cor 5:10 and Jesus' teaching in Matthew 25:31-46 ?

***** NOTE Weekend at home May 17th. Your group might like to discuss the input from the weekend - perhaps read Philippians as a whole.**

Discussion 3 The sinless sinner

2 Corinthians 5:11 - 6:2 (Sermon May 24th)

1. Read 1Cor 5:11 - 6:2 and list the strong and emotionally charged verbs Paul uses. What does this indicate about his relationship with Jesus and with members of the church in Corinth?
What issues arouse these issues in Paul?
Why do you think Paul is so passionate about them?
2. Have you ever tried to "persuade" someone about Christianity?
How did it go? What issues (if any) made it hard going?
What could you have done differently?
3. Paul says our reconciliation with God required the death of Jesus as our substitute. How would you respond to someone who says "Jesus' death was not necessary. Surely God could have dealt with sin in another less barbaric way?"
4. How would you respond to a friend who says she is interested in Christian faith but wants to put off a decision until later?

5. Paul describes a Christian person as a “new creation” where the “old has gone and the new has come”. What evidence should we expect to see in our own life of this new creation? Is this an instant change or a long term process?

Discussion 4 Costly affection

2 Corinthians 6:3 - 13 (Sermon May 31st)

1. Paul describes his life and ministry in a series of paradoxes in 2Cor 6:8b - 10. Choose two of these that interest you and fill out what they could involve. Philippians 3:1-10 and 2Cor 11:24 - 28 could help here.

2. Paul seems very concerned with his own reputation (2Cor 6:3-4 and 5:11). Why is reputation so important to him? What is the difference between “commending ourselves in every way” and being a “man pleaser”? What advice does Paul give to his young church leader Timothy on this issue in 2Timothy 4:1-5 ?

3. In what sense does a Christian person “possess everything” (2Cor 6:10) ? If this is true, why do we spend so much time and effort trying to get more and more possessions?

4. Imagine you have a child who has just completed a tertiary qualification and has been offered a great job with excellent prospects. He is considering rejecting the offer and taking a position with a Christian organisation involved in workplace evangelism. The position has no set salary but requires that each staff worker raise his own financial support. How will you advise him?

How would you use 2Corinthians 6:3-8 to raise important issues you think he should consider?