



*St Peter's Anglican Church
Wanneroo*

BIBLE STUDY NOTES FOR HOME GROUPS

TERM 2, 2021 (Part Two)
(6th June – 18th July)

The readings for the Sunday services this term, with a few minor differences, are the readings set out in the Lectionary.

Each week there will be a focus passage – the passage the sermon will be based upon the following Sunday – and three supplementary passages. In this second part of the term, the focus passages are all from Mark's Gospel. In your group studies you may wish to concentrate just on the focus passage alone, or all four passages. Sometimes there is a clear theme or connection between the four passages, but sometimes not!

At the end of each weekly session there is a theme for prayer which arises from the Bible passages just discussed.

STUDY 7

Dates: Week beginning 31st. May (sermon on Sunday 6th. June)

Sermon topic/theme: False accusations against Jesus

Bible Readings:

Focus Passage: **Mark 3: 20 - 35**

Supplementary Passages 1 Samuel 8: 4 - 20

Psalm 138

2 Corinthians 4: 13 – 5: 1

Focus Passage

Mark is a “no nonsense” gospel writer. He fills the gospel with short, often terse and laconic stories of the ministry of Jesus. The 16 verses in our passage today cover several events and sayings without much detail. But there is still much to occupy our thoughts and meditations.

Read: Mark: 3: 20 – 35

For reflection and discussion

1. What does Jesus’ warning about a divided house mean for us as individuals as well as for Christian groups?
2. The parables mentioned in verse 23 onwards are really two illustrations. The scribes made two accusations about Jesus. How do the two illustrations show the false logic of the scribes?
3. Jesus re-defines what He means by “His family”. How does this affect us?

4. Jesus lacked credibility according to His earthly family (see John 7:5), and they thought he was mad. Should we as Christians always try to appear perfectly sane? How is our witness affected by our behaviour?
 5. How can we resist “strongman Satan”. (Read Matthew 4: 1-11)
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Passage 2

This passage is about the time when the judges period had finished, and Israel was a collection of apostate tribes: “In those days there was no king in Israel. Everyone did what was right in his own eyes” (Judges 21: 25). Samuel became God’s prophet and made his sons judges over Israel, but his sons did not honour God, taking bribes and perverting justice (1 Samuel 8: 1-3).

The Israelites, through their elders, requested a king to rule over them. Samuel was not amused and felt rejected.

Read: 1 Samuel 8: 4 - 20

For reflection and discussion

7. Was instituting kingship as a pattern of government good, bad or neutral? What do you think would have been the ideal pattern of leadership for Israel in this situation?
 8. At God’s instruction, Samuel tells the Israelites the disadvantages of the monarchy which they have asked for. What are some of these disadvantages?
 9. The Israelites seemed to have forgotten what God had done for them in the past (verses 7-9). Apart from the exodus from Egypt, what else can you name that God had done for His children?
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Passage 3

Psalms 138 is a prayer of thanksgiving for God’s constant care for His people.

Read: Psalm 138

For reflection and discussion

11. In verse 7 the psalmist writes “Though I walk in the midst of trouble, you preserve my life”. Does this thought seem familiar?
 12. Verse 2 mentions the temple, and the psalm may be intended for public worship. Do our contemporary hymns of thanksgiving reflect the thoughts of the Psalmist in this psalm?
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Passage 4

In this passage, Paul refers to suffering by quoting Psalm 116 verse 10 in which the psalmist points out that in our suffering and brokenness our trust in God will help us and lead to glory when we are resurrected. The certainty of our resurrection outweighs our present suffering (verse 17).

Read: 2 Corinthians 4: 13 – 5: 1

For reflection and discussion

13. What does “the same spirit of faith” refer to (verse 13).
14. Does Paul suggest that “outward” or “bodily” things don’t matter? (vv. 16-18)
15. How do you think our “inner self is renewed” (verse 16)?
16. How best can we fix our eyes on the unseen world of Jesus and His glory?

Prayer Focus

Pray for the enthusiasm to do the Lord’s work in our individual lives and in our church fellowship, asking God to keep us from complacency.

STUDY 8

Dates: Week beginning 7th June (sermon on Sunday 13th June)

Sermon topic/theme: Parables of Jesus

Bible Readings:

Focus Passage: Mark 4: 21 - 34

Supplementary Passages 1 Samuel 15: 34 – 16: 13

Psalm 20

2 Corinthians 5: 8 - 17

Focus Passage

Mark's straight from the shoulder approach to telling the good news has little in the way of theology. Instead, he simply relates significant events. He notes that Jesus taught the people by parables and His disciples were afforded a private explanation, usually afterwards. In today's passage, Jesus follows the parable of the sower with two more "seed" parables.

Read: Mark 4: 21 - 34

For reflection and discussion

1. Jesus tells two parables about the kingdom of God. Much to the annoyance of zealots and others, this kingdom was not a political or military kingdom to replace the Roman army of occupation. What kind of kingdom was it? Can you list a few of its characteristics?
2. "He never spoke except using parables. But He explained everything to his own disciples in private." (Mark 4:34). Why "in private"?
3. If the kingdom of God is like a mustard seed, what does that imply about God's way of working?

Passage 2

God has had enough of the disobedience of King Saul; “You have rejected the word of the Lord, and the Lord has rejected you from being king over Israel” (1 Samuel 15: 26). This time God, not the people, will choose who will become king, and it will be a different kind of person who doesn’t fit the popular concept of a leader. God does not want an Eliab, nor an Abinadab. He wants a David.

Read: Samuel 15: 34 – 16: 13

For reflection and discussion

4. As the youngest son, David has been given the lowliest and dirtiest job. What is the significance of David’s occupation?
5. Look at verses 13 and 14. How does God mark the change from Saul to David?
6. Samuel was clearly afraid of Saul; the elders of Bethlehem were afraid of Samuel. How did God deal with this fear and distrust.

Passage 3

Psalms 20 and 21 are thematically linked. Psalm 20 is a prayer for victory and success; 21 is a prayer of thanksgiving for that victory and success. The first five verses of Psalm 20 contain requests that God will grant the King the needed victory. It is easy to see this prayer as one the disciples could have used in the Garden of Gethsemane instead of falling asleep.

Read Psalm 20

For reflection and discussion

7. If you regard this psalm as part of liturgy or worship, the first five verses express the wishes of the congregation. They all begin “May...” and include the word “we” (verse 5). What does the Psalmist think is the reason to “shout for joy”? (verse 5)
 8. “Selah” at the end of verse 5 may indicate a pause in the singing or performance in which all can meditate on the words just sung. What would you meditate on?
 9. The “anointed one” (verse 6) would refer to a king, such as David. However, remember that the anointed one is the “Messiah” (a word from the Hebrew), or “The Christ” (a word from the Greek). Who could the Psalmist be referring to in verse 6 “I know that the Lord gives victory to His anointed”?
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Passage 4

One of the best summaries of Christianity is in verse 17 of today’s fourth passage – “. . . if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation has come” (ESV). Paul is even briefer in his Greek wording – “anyone in Christ, new creation”.

Read: 2 Corinthians 5: 6 – 17

For reflection and discussion

1. What does Paul mean by a “new creation”?
2. Verse 7, “. . . we walk by faith, not by sight”. This is not about belief in things unseen, but about how we live our Christian lives. Can you give examples of these two contrasting ways of living.
3. Verse 10 tells us that we all must appear before the judgment seat of Jesus. Paul reassures us in Romans 8:1 that those in Christ Jesus have no condemnation. For what are we judged according to v.10?

Prayer Focus

Pray that God will strengthen our faith in the crucified and risen Lord Jesus, and increase our commitment to God and to each other.

STUDY 9

Dates: Week beginning 14th June (sermon on Sunday 20th June)

Sermon topic/theme: Jesus calms the storm

Bible Readings:

Focus Passage: **Mark 4: 35 - 41**

Supplementary Passages 1 Samuel 17: 32 - 49

Psalm 133

2 Corinthians 6: 1 – 13

Focus Passage

Jesus calms the storm. Mark now moves from relating the parables of Jesus to describing a real-life experience. There is a marked contrast between the human reactions of the disciples and the behaviour of Jesus, which is both human and divine. Storms are common on the Sea of Galilee. In Psalms we read of God commanding the sea, waves and wind to calm down (e.g. Psalm 89: 9, 107: 23-29). Remember the story of Jonah, too.

Read: Mark 4: 35 - 41

For reflection and discussion

1. If the wind, waves, and storm are all part of God's creation, how do we regard tsunamis and cyclones? Are natural disasters to be classified as "Acts of God" (as insurance companies do).
2. The disciples are terrified of the storm; in the calm which follows, they are terrified of Jesus' power. Discuss this seeming contradictory occurrence.

3. Is this an example of, “O you of little faith”? (verse 40). Is Jesus scolding the disciples for not trusting Him enough?
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Passage 2

The familiar story of David and Goliath. Goliath was huge, in fact over three metres tall (1 Samuel 17: 4). The Philistines, Israel’s enemy, were relying on Goliath’s physical might. David was not with Saul’s army, as he was shepherding and running errands. For forty days Goliath taunted Saul and his army. David had to convince Saul of his ability to help, pointing out that he had killed bears and lions.

Read: 1 Samuel 17: 32 - 49

For reflection and discussion

4. What motivates David to accept Goliath’s challenge (v.36)
5. Both combatants made their speeches before the conflict. What is the essential difference between the tone of the two speeches? (vv. 43-47)
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Passage 3

This psalm is one of a group often called “pilgrimage psalms”, sung as the believers ascended to the temple. It begins by emphasising unity within the people of God. Then follow two similes: the oil of consecration, and the life-giving dew linking Mount Hermon in the north with Zion in the south.

Read: Psalm 133

For reflection and discussion

6. Unity in Israel did not last, as just over 100 years after this psalm was written the country divided into Israel in the north and Judah in the south. Division has filled the pages of Church history since. What

should believers do when division on any scale threatens? (Check Jesus' words in Matthew 5: 23-25).

7. In v.3, what has God given to his people who "live together in unity"?
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Passage 4

As you read this passage you will encounter an extensive catalogue of suffering and troubles which Paul has experienced in his ministry. He balances the list of his hardships with a list of blessings from God.

Read: 2 Corinthians 6: 1 – 13

For reflection and discussion

8. Paul's lists of hardships recall the concept of the suffering servant. Look up Acts 20:19. His 9 hardships are listed in groups of three. Consider these: general hardships, personal sufferings, hardships voluntarily undertaken by Paul. Which of these could apply to us in Wanneroo in 2021? How will we deal with them if they did occur?
9. Paul usually describes himself as God's slave (*doulos*), but here in verse 4 he uses the word *diakonos* (from which we get "deacon") which is usually translated as "servant". What are the different implications of being a servant and/or a slave?
10. More lists! In verses 8-10 Paul lists 9 pairs of qualities which are opposites of each other. He sees them as part of his armour for "fighting the good fight". Look at each of them and try to see how these qualities would equip Paul and us for spiritual combat.

Prayer Focus

Isaiah says that God has listened to his people in a favourable time: "In a day of salvation I have helped you". Thank God that he still listens to us today, and pray that he will continue to help us.

STUDY 10

Dates: Week beginning 21st June (sermon on Sunday 27th June)

Sermon topic/theme: Jesus the healer

Bible Readings:

Focus Passage: **Mark 5:21-43**

Supplementary Passages 2 Samuel 1: 1, 17-27

Psalm 130

2 Corinthians 8: 7 – 15

Focus Passage

This passage from Mark's Gospel contains two stories about healing, one story 'embedded' within the other. Jesus would have been seen by many as a bit of a troublemaker, and Jairus – as a senior member of the local synagogue – would probably not have been comfortable being associated with Jesus. But Jairus's desperation over his daughter helped him to overcome his reservations about Jesus. The elderly woman would also have mixed feelings about approaching Jesus – she was ritually unclean because of her condition, and nobody she had approached for help so far had been able to assist her.

Read: Mark 5:21-43

For reflection and discussion

1. Spend a few moments imagining the scene as described by Mark; try to put yourself in the shoes of either Jairus or the woman – what might they have been experiencing?
2. The woman 'touched Jesus' clothes' and was healed. Mark describes Jesus as realising *that power had gone out from him* (v.30), but he tells the

woman that *your faith has healed you* (v.34). Do these two statements contradict each other?

3. Jesus referred to the woman's faith (v.34), and faith is implicit in the story of Jairus (see vv.22-23). It is unlikely that either Jairus or the woman would have known much about Jesus at this time – so in what way could they be said to have faith, and can we learn from this?
 4. What do you think Jesus meant when he said to the woman 'go in peace'?
 5. Why do you think Jesus gave 'strict orders' to the parents of Jairus' daughter that they were *not to let anyone know about this* (v.43)?
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Passage 2

Read 2 Corinthians 8: 7 – 15

In the first paragraph of this chapter, Paul describes the generosity – the 'grace of giving' – that he has seen in the church in Macedonia. In v.7 he suggests to the Corinthian church, perhaps in a somewhat teasing or provocative way, that since they excel in so many other ways, they need to ensure that they also excel in this grace, the grace of giving.

For reflection and discussion

6. We think of 'grace' as meaning God's undeserved love for us, seen especially in bringing us into a new and reconciled relationship with himself. But is Paul using the term 'grace' differently here, to describe not just what God does *in* our lives, but also *through* our lives for others?
7. Paul urges the Corinthians to 'finish the job' that they started – see 1 Cor. 16:2. How is Jesus an example for them in this (v.9)? Are there aspects of our lives as Christians – individually or as a church – where we need to be urged to 'finish the work'?

8. Are there hints in this passage that this was not an easy topic for Paul to raise with the Corinthian church? In many ways the work of the Gospel depends on the generous giving of Christians – are we perhaps too hesitant at times in speaking directly about the topic of Christian giving in our church?
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Passage 3

Read Psalm 130

The opening words of this Psalm could have been the prayer of both Jairus – crying from a depth of fear about his daughter – and the woman who was healed – crying from a depth of despair, isolation, and shame.

For reflection and discussion

9. As the Psalmist cries out to God, what is it about God that gives him hope?
10. If you were reading this Psalm with someone and they asked you what was meant by the words *and in his word I put my hope* in v.5b, how would you respond to their question?
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Passage 4

Read 2 Samuel 1:1, 17-27

This reading from 2 Samuel expresses David's anguish when he hears of the death of King Saul and his son Jonathon.

Prayer focus

Healing is more than physical healing – it is about the restoration of wholeness, physical, psychological, emotional, relational. Pray for healing in our lives, and in our church and community.

STUDY 10

Dates: Week beginning 28th June (sermon on Sunday 4th July)

Sermon topic/theme: Proclaiming the Kingdom

Bible Readings:

Focus Passage: **Mark 6:1-13**

Supplementary Passages 2 Samuel 5: 1-5, 9-10

Psalm 48

2 Corinthians 12:1-10

Focus Passage

A comment by Tom Wright on this passage helps us to put ourselves a little more into the event of Jesus' sermon in the Nazareth synagogue: "Most preachers can remember the first time they stood up to preach in front of their parents. It's not the same as with other things people do. If you are a musician, they probably heard you practicing when you were little; if you're a footballer, they saw you playing in the garden. But preaching is something dangerously public that emerges from something intensely private. . . Multiply that up a bit to allow for the fact that Jesus' message was different. He wasn't just another synagogue preacher, telling people how to obey God's law, offering God's hope for the future. . . Jesus was saying, apparently on his own authority, that the kingdom was coming, then and there. Where he was, the kingdom was." (p.66)

Read Mark 6:1-13

For reflection and discussion

1. What mixed feelings did the synagogue congregation have about Jesus?
2. We are told in vv.5-6 that Jesus could do no miracles there (apart from healing a few people!), and that he was amazed at their lack of faith. What conclusions can we draw from this?
3. Why do you think the congregation took offense at Jesus, knowing him as they obviously did (v.3)?
4. Do you think that the Twelve would have been helped by the example of the way Jesus was received in the Nazareth synagogue when Jesus sent them out to preach (vv.7-13)? Do these verses have any lessons for us about evangelism and ministry?

Second passage

The account of David being – finally – anointed as king over Israel is an interesting contrast to Jesus' reception at Nazareth.

Read 2 Samuel 5:1-5, 9-10

5. Why do you think David was accepted but Jesus rejected?
6. What gave the tribes of Israel confidence about David being their king?

Third passage

“... drama has always had a part in worship from ancient times. Indeed it originated there. In Jewish worship, for thousands of years, there has been an annual enactment of the escape from Egypt – the Passover. In Christian worship, the very heart is the Eucharist, when the drama of the bread and wine is newly presented. And in the Psalms it is plain that other great moments in Jerusalem's worship found lively reality through sacred drama.”
(Eaton: p.119)

Read Psalm 48

For reflection and discussion

7. What do vv.1-3 tell us about the significance of the city of Jerusalem for God's people?
 8. What is the story that is being told in the Psalm, and why would it have been important to the Israelites?
 9. In vv.12-13 there is an invitation to take action that will remind the congregation of God's faithfulness. Are there dramas, enactments, in worship that have been especially helpful to you at some point?
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Passage 4

Read 2 Corinthians 12:1-10

For reflection and discussion

10. When you read this passage in the light of Mark 6:1-13, what thoughts come to mind?
11. In what ways do you think that the Lord's power is made perfect in Paul's weakness (v.9)? What implications might this have for (i) those involved in Christian ministry or leadership, and (ii) for all of us as we seek to live as disciples of Jesus?
12. Are there lessons from this passage about how we should give our testimony to God's grace in our life?

Prayer focus

Pray for humility,
and for a growing sense of God's grace being sufficient
in all of life's circumstances.

STUDY 11

Dates: Week beginning 5th July (sermon on Sunday 11th July)

Sermon topic/theme: John the Baptist

Bible Readings:

Focus Passage: **Mark 6:14-29**

Supplementary Passages 2 Samuel 6: 1-19
Psalm 24
Ephesians 1:1-14

Focus passage

The story of the execution of John the Baptist is both sad and gruesome. It must also have been disturbing for the disciples of Jesus: if the messenger who foretold the coming of the Messiah was treated this way, what did the future hold for Jesus?

Read Mark 6:14-29

For discussion and reflection

1. The 'this' that King Herod heard about (v.14) was the response of the people to the disciples of Jesus when he sent them out to preach and call people to repentance (Mark 6:6b-13). What do you imagine lay behind Herod's reaction as described in v.16?
2. Was there more to Herod than we sometimes think (v.20)?
3. What does this passage tell us about Herod as a king?
4. For many of the people, Herod was all they knew about a king; how important was this in setting the scene for the kingship of Jesus?

Second passage

Ton Wright describes this passage (vv.3-14) as being in the form of “. . . a great Jewish-style thanksgiving prayer: ‘Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Messiah, who . . .’”. It is the story of creation and exodus, of redemption and inheritance: the great Jewish story, now seen from a new angle, the redefined royal angle, the Messianic angle that never entered Herod’s head.” (p.87). As you read this passage, try to hear it as (i) a great outpouring of praise from Paul, and (ii) the story of all that God has done for his creation and for us – list the events, the steps in the story, that Paul alludes to.

Read Ephesians 1:1-14

For reflection and discussion

5. “This is the reason why worship and praise are so crucial. They give opportunity for us to tell the truth about ourselves and God.” Do you think that this is what Paul’s great expression of praise in vv.3-14 does? Do you see any implications for our worship, as individuals and/or as a church community?
6. “Our prayer and worship must . . . remind us who God is. Rather than prayer being our list of needs . . . it must describe God and his reality and thereby draw us closer to God.” Is this a good description of what Paul’s prayer of praise achieves in vv.3-14?
7. Paul uses the phrase ‘in Christ’ a number of times – in which verses does this phrase occur, directly (‘in Christ’) or indirectly (‘in him’)? Consider also Acts 17:28: “For in him we live and move and have our being”. What do you think Paul means by ‘in Christ’?
8. We can all too often think of being ‘blessed’ as meaning we are fortunate, that things are going well for us. Do you think that was what Paul had in mind when he describes the Christians in Ephesus (and himself) as ‘blessed’ in v.3?

Third passage

This passage tells of a momentous event in the story of David – the ark of God is taken to Jerusalem. David will seek to build a permanent home for the ark in Jerusalem (the Temple), but God tells him that he is the one who is building a

'house' for David, a dynasty. It will be his son Solomon who will eventually build the Temple to house the ark of God (2 Samuel ch. 7-8, and 1 Kings 5).

Read 2 Samuel 6: 1-19

For reflection and discussion

9. It seems that David took all the necessary steps to treat the ark with respect and honour – all the 'able young men of Israel' were involved, and a new cart was used. Why do you think Uzzah suffered such a drastic fate (vv.6-7)?
10. What do you make of David's reaction to Uzzah's death (vv.8-10)?
11. Do you think David approached the task of taking the ark to Jerusalem differently the second time (vv.12-15, 17-19)?
12. Michal appears to have been caught in the middle between David and her father Saul – see 1 Sam 18:20-21,28; 1 Sam 25:44. What thoughts do you have about how she watched the celebrations that accompanied the ark coming to Jerusalem (v.16)?

Fourth passage

The 'everlasting doors', the 'ancient doors', in this Psalm were the doors of the Temple in Jerusalem. Doubtless they were created by the most skilled craftsmen out of the very best of timber – but *everlasting* doors? The term is of course symbolic – the doors to the Temple were the doors to the place where worshippers felt the very presence of God, of the eternal world.

Read Psalm 24

13. Why do we have church buildings? And does it matter what they look like, inside or outside? Is there, or should there be, something special about a place where people gather to worship God?

Prayer Focus

Pray for a growing understanding of what it means
to worship and praise God,
and that God will help this to become more real for you.

STUDY 12

Dates: Week beginning 12th June (sermon on Sunday 18th July)

Sermon topic/theme: The crowd who is lost

Bible Readings:

Focus Passage: **Mark 6:30-34, 53-56**

Supplementary Passages 2 Samuel 7: 1-16

Psalm 89:19-38

Ephesians 2:11-22

Focus passage

Today's passage from Mark's Gospel tells of two occasions when the crowds pressed around Jesus and his disciples to such an extent that they had to get away. The first – vv.30-34 – was after the disciples reported back to Jesus about their experiences on the mission he had sent them on to the towns and villages (6:6-13). The second was after the feeding of the 5,000 and Jesus' subsequent walk across the waters of the Sea of Galilee to join the disciples in their boat.

Read Mark 6:30-34, 53-56

For reflection and discussion

1. The crowd is described by Mark as 'like sheep without a shepherd' and Jesus' response was to have compassion on them and to teach them (v.34). Later, at Gennesaret, the focus is on the miracles of healing that occurred (v.56). What are 'the crowds' today – the many who don't know Jesus but who yearn for a spiritual dimension in

their lives – seeking? And how can *we* – not them, ‘the church’ – help to meet that need?

2. Twice in these verses Jesus encourages his disciples to find some peace and quiet – in v.31, and then again in v.45-46. We today live in a phenomenally busy, noisy and demanding world. Do we give enough emphasis in our Christian lives to ‘getting away’, so that we can both relax and also be with God? How could we do this more, both individually and as a church community?
 3. Our Lectionary for today asks us to focus on the crowds and their needs, and their pursuit of Jesus. Sometimes the language we use as Christians, in worship and in talking about our faith, can be an obstacle for those around us who do not know or understand the Christian faith. Do you have any thoughts about how we can remove – or at least reduce – this obstacle?
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Second passage

David has a good idea: now that the ark of the covenant is safely in Jerusalem, let’s build a suitable house for it instead of leaving it in a tent! But God has other ideas. There is a play on the idea of a ‘house’ in this story. David wants to provide a house, a permanent structure, for the ark; but God’s plan is infinitely greater, he will provide a ‘house’ for David, a dynasty that will last – ‘your house and your kingdom will endure forever before me; your throne will be established for ever’ (v.16). Verses 12-16, can be read in two ways: David’s son Solomon did indeed build the Temple in Jerusalem, but we also see the foreshadowing of the coming of King Jesus, the Messiah.

Read 2 Samuel 7: 1-16

For reflection and discussion

4. Was David’s concern, v.1-2, a reasonable one?
5. Why do you think God gave a firm ‘no’ to David’s plans to build a house (Temple) for the ark of the covenant?

6. How did Nathan fulfil his calling as a prophet in this story?
 7. The NIV sets out God's message to David given through Nathan in three paragraphs: vv.5-7, vv.8-11, vv.12-16. How would you express, in your own words, the essence of the message in each of these three paragraphs?
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Passage 3

The Temple that Solomon built had strict boundaries that kept Jew and Gentile, male and female, separate, and on a few could enter the presence of God in the Holy of Holies. But God's Temple (v.21) is not built of stone and has no dividing walls (v.14). The Holy of Holies, God's presence, is now open to all who are in Christ (see Heb. 9:1-7, 10:19-20).

Read Ephesians 2:11-22

For reflection and discussion

8. This passage from Ephesians contains so much, and is rich in meaning – as you read it, what stands out for you, and why?
 9. In the New Testament world, the coming together as one body of Jew and Gentile was radical in the extreme. Have we lost something of the wonder of that? What should we see 'coming together as one' in the church today?
 10. How much does our church reflect the 'wholeness' and unity Pauls describes?
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Fourth Passage

Read Psalm 89:19-38

Prayer focus

Pray for new ideas, for creativity for ourselves and our church, in sharing the good news with the crowds around us who are spiritually hungry.

NOTES

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Further reading/references

Tom Wright (2001). *Mark for Everyone*. London: SPCK

Tom Wright (2012). *Twelve Months of Sundays: Biblical meditations on the Christian year*. London: SPCK

John Eaton (2006). *Psalms for Life: Hearing and Praying the Book of Psalms*. London: SPCK