



THE UNITING
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH
IN SOUTHERN
AFRICA

Mission & Discipleship Committee

Convener: Rev Christopher Judelsohn

Secretary: Mrs Eddie Stopforth

Box 11333

Queenswood

Pretoria 0121

Telephone: (0827597396)

E-mail: eddiestop@global.co.za

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Dear Ministers and Session Clerks

Following the proposal of the Mission and Discipleship Committee and, in the light of the success of the a similar programme in the last two years, the General Assembly of 2016 agreed that October 2016 would be a "Month of Mission." This is an attempt to develop a healthy understanding of "Mission" in our congregations. The Month of Mission has three facets:

1. A series of outlines for a preaching series that could be used in October, or at another time. These are below.
2. Alongside the preaching series, there is a set of daily readings (also below) that could be given to congregants so that they would be reading passages that relate to the church's mission in their daily devotional time. The hope is that a large part of the denomination will be moving in the same direction with a wonderful focus on Mission. Please share the readings with members of the congregation you serve.
3. A number of our ministers will participate in writing daily email devotions based on these texts. People can subscribe to the devotions list at <http://eepurl.com/cgVDBb> Please share this link with as many people in the congregation as possible.

Please have a look at the material below and consider using it in the congregations you serve in the month of October.

God bless you!

Theo Groeneveld

Member of the Mission and Discipleship Committee.

October – Month of Mission. Jesus – Reaching People.

The preaching series and Daily Readings for October concentrate on Jesus' work to proclaim the Kingdom of God. When one considers David Bosch's idea of *Missio Dei* (The Mission of God) which emphasises that God is already at work in the world, then Jesus' incarnation and ministry is the *Missio Dei* in its most glorious form.

The Sermon series explores the Incarnation of Jesus on the first Sunday and then, for the remaining Sundays, examines Jesus' interactions with individuals, particularly women in an attempt to highlight how Jesus dealt with people individually, sensitively (contextually) and tenderly. The fact that Jesus did interact with women significantly in the midst of an overbearing patriarchal culture is striking. There is much we can learn from Him.

- Sunday 2 Oct

- **Series Intro: John 1:10-18 and Philippians 2:5-8**

- Understanding and Emphasising Incarnation

- The Incarnation is the fullest extent of *Missio Dei* – The Mission of God to the World
- A loose translation of v:14: *The Word became flesh and pitched His tent in our neighbourhood*
- Jesus came to teach us and *show* us the way.
- The Philippians passage shows the steps downward that Jesus took.
- Understand God's amazing love: Sending His Son, Coming into our world, showing the way, and giving His all for us.
- Rest of the series – Jesus and women.
(This is especially significant in a Patriarchal Society – every time Jesus spoke to or ministered to a woman He was defying the cultural bias of the day.)

- Sunday 9 Oct

- **“Blood & Isolation” Luke 8:43-48.**

- Luke the Doctor gives longest account.
- Her situation is sad and desperate.
 - She has been ill for long
 - She's tried all sorts of “cures” and suffered disappointment and financial loss
 - She's permanently unclean: Can't go to temple – all who touch her are unclean
- She expresses desperate faith – prompted by Jesus' reputation and the Holy Spirit.
- Jesus seems to expose her, but does so to fully heal her.
- Jesus heals the whole person.
 - She is able to tell her story
 - He notices her
 - He affirms her faith and her healing
 - He reconnects her after her isolation
- Application to Mission:
 1. Be the Hem of Jesus garment to the world
 2. Be ready to stop and pay attention to what God is doing
 3. Take time to hear their stories.
 4. Care for the whole person: Physical, Mental, Social, Emotional-Spiritual

- Sunday 16 Oct

- **“Water & Shame” John 4:4-28**

- Jesus didn't **have** to go thru Samaria – in fact most Jews went around it.
The **“had to go”** probably comes from John's belief that Jesus was moved by the Spirit.
- “Jews do not associate with Samaritans...” - the legacy of race and culture and sexism
Jesus deliberately cuts through it all.
- He relentlessly pushes to the core issue.
Their conversation goes from
physical water, (she even seems to be flirting with him - “are you greater?”)
to spiritual thirst, (He confronts her with her spiritual need)
the truth of her life, (Jesus has great empathy – her 5 husbands divorced her – she could not divorce them and her present man would not even marry her)
to theology (the age old debate of whether Mt Gerazim or Mt Zion was the place to worship was like the modern excuse of the conflict between Protestant and Catholic in Ireland when people want to dismiss a spiritual conversation.)
and then worship where she is simply invited to be herself (in spirit and in truth)
- Her abandoned water jar speaks of the restoration she experiences.

- Her changed life (having gone to the well in the heat of the day to avoid the village people, she is now knocking on their doors in the middle of siesta time) and her testimony impacts the whole village
- Application to Mission:
 1. Climb over racial, cultural and gender barriers
 2. Be on the lookout for divine encounters and obey the promptings you have
 3. Listen to what is being said and be ready to offer truth
 4. Sometimes God gives us insights into people's lives and hurts – be gentle with these.
- Sunday 23 Oct
“Stones & Victimisation” John 8:2-11.
 - The injustice of the situation – where is the man??
 - The woman has been reduced to being being used as “bait” in the trap
 - She was caught in adultery – so possibly not even clothed – maybe a sheet around her
 - To stone or not had no right answer
 - If he said “Yes” the Romans would regard him as a rabble rouser
 - If he said “No” the Pharisees would claim He was soft on the Law
 - What did Jesus write? Why did He write?
 - Some have suggested He wrote a summary of the Law
 - Others suggest that He did it to take their eyes off her
 - What does Jesus offer her?
 - Deliverance from the unjust situation that she'd been placed in
 - Forgiveness in the form of non-condemnation
 - A call to a changed life
 - Application to Mission
 1. Mission is about addressing injustices
 2. Mission can be about confronting bullies
 3. Mission also confronts brokenness in the victim
(Taking the slave out of slavery and slavery out of the slave)
- Sunday 30 Oct
“Crumbs & Exclusion” Matthew 15:21-28
 This passage deals with the dangers of “pride and prejudice”
 - “She's a Canaanite, why should Jesus offer her anything?”
 - - Her desperate need: A demon-possessed daughter
 - - What does Jesus mean by His “lost-sheep” and “crumbs” remarks?
 - Some have suggested that he was saying Jews first and then others.
 - But He doesn't hesitate to heal the Centurion's Servant or the Samaritan Leper
 - This is also not consistent with the mandate given to the Jews to be a light to the nations
 - SO, the best interpretation is that Jesus is quoting conventional thinking tongue-in-cheek that He is mischievously quoting an old saying with a twinkle in His eye?
 - And she seems to get it... because her answer is clever and subversive,
giving Jesus a way to help her “legitimately”.
 - There is a distinct playfulness about this encounter that subverts the classism and racism
 - And He gives her much more than crumbs
 - And He commends her subversive faith (she sees God more clearly than the Pharisees do)
 - Application to Mission
 1. Race, Culture, Class can be real barriers to mission.
 2. The gospel can be subversive and humour is a powerful weapon to break down walls.
(In this context Jesus doesn't take on or name the race and class issues – He playfully subverts them)
 3. Jesus gives His best to everyone – no matter who they are.

Daily Readings

These are daily readings for the month of October. They are all encounters with Jesus. The idea is to look at these encounters through the lense of "Jesus as Missionary." How does Jesus treat these people? What does He do for them? What change does He bring to their lives? What is the impact of the encounter?

Date	Reading	Summary
Sat 1 Oct	Lk 1:25-33	Baby Jesus and Simeon
Sun 2 Oct	Jn 1	SERMON: - Incarnation
Mon 3 Oct	Mt 3:13-17	Jesus and JohnB
Tue 4 Oct	Lk 4:16-21	Jesus' first sermon
Wed 5 Oct	Mk 1:40-45	A man with leprosy
Thu 6 Oct	Lk 5:1-11	Calling Simon Peter
Fri 7 Oct	Jn 1:43-50	Calling Nathanael
Sat 8 Oct	Lk 5:27-32	Calling Levi
Sun 9 Oct	Lk 8:43-48	SERMON: Blood and Isolation
Mon 10 Oct	Mt 8:5-10	A Centurion
Tue 11 Oct	Jn 3:1-16	Stretching Nicodemus
Wed 12 Oct	Mk 2:1-12	A paralysed man
Thu 13 Oct	Jn 5:1-15	A man who is physically healed but not spiritually
Fri 14 Oct	Jn 9:24-33	A blind man is healed physically and spiritually
Sat 15 Oct	Lk 7:11-16	A widow and her boy
Sun 16 Oct	Jn 4:4-28	SERMON Water & Shame
Mon 17 Oct	Lk 7:36-48	A "sinner" and a Pharisee
Tue 18 Oct	Lk 8:26-33 & 38-39	A man in the grip of great evil
Wed 19 Oct	Mk 9:17-29	A desperate dad
Thu 20 Oct	Mk10:46-52	Bartimaeus
Fri 21 Oct	Mk 11:15-18	Money-changers aka space-invaders
Sat 22 Oct	Mk 12:28-34	Not far...
Sun 23 Oct	Jn 8:2-11	SERMON Stones & Victimisation
Mon 24 Oct	Jn 11:17-35	Grieving Sisters
Tue 25 Oct	Lk 19:1-10	Zacchaeus
Wed 26 Oct	Lk 17:11-19	Not all were grateful
Thu 27 Oct	Mt 14:28-33	How Jesus treats those who fail
Fri 28 Oct	Mk 10:17-22	A man tragically trapped
Sat 29 Oct	Lk 23:38-43	A last-minute man
Sun 30 Oct	Mt 15:21-28	SERMON Crumbs & Exclusion
Mon 31 Oct	Jn 20:24-29	Helping a doubter