

Our Saviour Lutheran Church, Aberfoyle Park

Home Worship Service

Led by Pastor Andy Kowald

March 20, 2022

Welcome & Introduction

Welcome everyone! Welcome to those also joining on Lovestream.

Some time ago I came across this video. It's what an aeroplane pilot gets to see when landing a plane in Queenstown, New Zealand.

[Landing at Queenstown New Zealand Airport - Bing video](#)

The words that came with the video said: ***This is what the pilot sees, and the passengers do not see, during landing at Queenstown New Zealand Airport***

When I started watching the video it was exactly as I expected. New Zealand DOES have some amazing scenery.

What I didn't expect was just how close the plane seemed to be approaching the mountain range as it got closer to the cloud.

When it turned I was relieved. But then it began heading for that second mountain – ***turn! turn!*** But not only did I **not** see how we were going, we then started descending into white darkness. Where were the mountains now?

Dear God, stay in control...

Then, all of a sudden, we broke through and we were in heaven! I mean Queenstown!

When I think about Jesus, and the life He calls you and me into, it seems to me that once we start believing, our life is like the bit like that point where the plane looks like it might hit the mountain range, then descends into the cloud. **The life of a believer is life in the cloud!** And we wonder if we are safe!

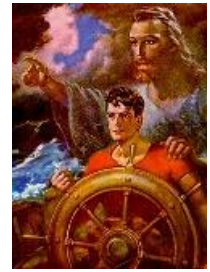
And the truth is, except for the confidence we get when we receive the Good News found in God's Word, and in Holy Communion, and in a few other exceptional reminders of heaven, we don't leave the cloud until God calls us home!!

Life in the cloud is a life of fears and dangers that we can't seem to free ourselves from. **So it turns into a life of completely trusting God – our pilot.** THAT'S the most important fruit – living, believing that you are a child of God, and that God IS looking after you despite the cloud!

Here's an old fashioned picture that tells a similar story. Many of us older Christians had on our bedroom walls, or in our lounge rooms.

Trusting God, when the storms of life don't look very Godly, is what we are called to!

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.



Songs

O Praise the Name CCLI#7037787

Breathe CCLI#1874117

Bible Reading

Luke 13:1-9

Now there were some present at that time who told Jesus about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mixed with their sacrifices. ² Jesus answered, "Do you think that these Galileans were worse sinners than all the other Galileans because they suffered this way? ³ I tell you, no! But unless you repent, you too will all perish. ⁴ Or those eighteen who died when the tower in Siloam fell on them—do you think they were more guilty than all the others living in Jerusalem? ⁵ I tell you, no! But unless you repent, you too will all perish." ⁶ Then he told this parable: "A man had a fig tree growing in his vineyard, and he went to look for fruit on it but did not find any. ⁷ So he said to the man who took care of the vineyard, 'For three years now I've been coming to look for fruit on this fig tree and haven't found any. Cut it down! Why should it use up the soil?' ⁸ "Sir," the man replied, 'leave it alone for one more year, and I'll dig around it and fertilize it. ⁹ If it bears fruit next year, fine! If not, then cut it down.'"

Message

Two weeks and two days ago I woke to the shock news that Shane Warne, one of the world's greatest spin bowlers had died. At the age of 52...

Here's my favourite picture of Shane Warne I got it off pixabay. Have a look...



died.

I have heard on the news that since Shane Warne's death a wave of interest has been shown by men to have their heart health checked!

Why? ... Because of the fear that it might happen to THEM!

Fears and dangers cause us to ask questions. We ask the questions because we want to be relieved of our fears. Like the questions asked in our text. ***Those people in Galilee who Pilate killed, they had their blood mixed with the blood of their sacrifices ... I guess that means they must have been pretty bad people Jesus!?***

Meaning: I haven't had MY blood mixed with my sacrifices, so I can't be as bad as them, hey Jesus! I must be OK...!

Jesus tells another similar story, but the outcome is the same. He is effectively saying: ***Don't be ridiculous! You want to be at peace with God don't you? On judgment day you don't want to be caught on the wrong side with God, do you? That's the issue isn't it? Well ... get near to God! That's what repentance and forgiveness is all about. Live like your love depends on God!***

The Gospel of Luke is on about this all the time! Repentance and forgiveness...

It's one of the important things Jesus says at the end of the Gospel (Luke 24) *"This is what is written: The Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, ⁴⁷ and repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.*

Luke is CONSTANTLY on about the goodness of repentance – the goodness of turning back to God.

5:32

I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."

15:7

I tell you ... there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent.

15:10

In the same way, I tell you, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents."

17:3,4

³ So watch yourselves (be on your guard!).

"If your brother or sister sins against you, rebuke them; and if they repent, forgive them. ⁴ Even if they sin against you seven times in a day and seven times come back to you saying 'I repent,' you must forgive them."

What brings the greatest joy in heaven is the repentance of sinners. And not just repenting, but **living repentantly!** And as Luke 3:8 says ***bearing fruit worthy of repentance.***

What sort of fruit is that? What sort of fruit is Jesus life?

Luke 12 offers the following...

v7 ***consider yourselves valuable***

v8 ***acknowledge Christ before others***

v15 *be on guard against greed*
 v21 *be rich toward God*
 v22 *don't worry about your life*
 v31 *strive for the kingdom*
 v33 *sell possessions and give to the poor*
 v35-40 *be ready for the Son of Man's return*
 v47 *be doing what the master wants*
 v56 *interpret the present time*

If you look at the rest of the New Testament the list is MUCH longer. But the list especially sees PEOPLE as fruit. 1 Corinthians 16:15 calls the first converts in Archaia, the *first fruit* (απαρχη) of **Achaia**.

This is why we love our neighbours!

This is why Our Saviour is always keen to provide opportunities for you to invite your neighbours to events where we gather together!

It is interesting that the "sin" of the fig tree that Jesus speaks about, is not that fig tree is producing bad fruit... It's not doing anything bad! Its problem is that it is doing NOTHING! It is just taking up space in the orchard!

A Japanese Christian, Toyohiko Kagawa, once wrote...

I read
In a book
That a man called
Christ
Went about doing good.
It is very disconcerting to me
That I am so easily
Satisfied
With just
Going about.

God expects fruit!

God has expectations! Great expectations!

God has great expectations for the world!

God had great expectations for Jesus

He expected Him to agonize over the truth

He expected Him to resist the devil

And in doing so He expected Jesus to have His faith IN GOD strengthened as a result!

God does NOT expect us to fear the devil! He expects us to know that he is defeated! And that God delivers us from him!

Having Godly fruit comes from a life of investing in GOD'S Word, a life full of Jesus flavours.

A young man once proudly told me that his boss spent **\$3,500** a year on him. He said it was to make sure that he was at the top of his game. Professional development... INVESTING in your business.

The young man and his future bride had come to me for pre-marriage counselling. I wondered what he might be willing to invest in his marriage each year. Do you know what he said, sort with a sneer, "Huh... **NOTHING!**"

What an ungodly answer! Our marriages deserve a daily, weekly, and monthly investment of time, money, emotional digging and building – all based around getting to know the gift of love and grace and mercy that God himself yearns to give!

Bearing fruit means that God is not the only One who has expectations. WE TOO will have great expectations, God-expectations...

For our marriages

For our life, and healing. Many Christian people expect nothing. They get nothing! It's not that we press this magic button and God does what WE want! But we have high expectations that God looks after His children – that's US!

This issue is not up for debate! We must bear fruit! It would not be God's way to let us off the hook about this!

But I can also say this: **do not be afraid!** God is keen to fill you with Jesus life. Luke 12:32 says, **Do not be afraid, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.**

So like good children, we don't just crawl around on all fours, like someone in a dark room hoping not to fall. But together we learn to stand, and walk, and run as we trust that God is our pilot! He is always in the cloud with us, and we end up bearing fruit – fruit of His loving kind!

Amen.

Song

I'm Your Servant CCLI#2396374

Confession and Absolution

Dear heavenly Father,

We speak to You today out of Your mercy and grace.

You had high expectations of Jesus. You would not be satisfied with less than the cost of HIS LIFE for US! What great love for us!

But we... we are so often satisfied with a life that bears little or no fruit for You.

This is sin. Please forgive us.

Renew in us every day the truth that in Jesus we belong to You!

Renew in us every day the truth that You are at work in our world, bearing the fruit of saving lives, and that, in Jesus, we have the privilege of joining You in this work.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Our heavenly Father HAS had mercy on us! He has sent His own Son to die for us. His Word is true, If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. I therefore declare: Your sin is forgiven! In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Prayers

Prayer points to ponder:

- Lord Jesus, thank you for the kingdom life you offer to us, a life of freedom and blessing. We want to live lives worthy of you and all that you have done for us. Help us always draw closer and closer to you that we may live, not in fear or mediocrity but one that is intentional and that bears fruit in a way that is Godly and pleasing and honours you.
- We ask for your continued wisdom and guidance on our Call process, for our Call Committee and for the Pastor you are preparing to call to Our Saviour.
- We pray for your comfort, help and healing to those suffering with COVID or those who may be isolated from others because of COVID. Reassure them of your presence in their lives and your unending love.
- Be with those struggling with loneliness, depression, financial or health concerns. We pray especially for people in our own community. Remind them of your unending love and care for them and prompt each of us to reach out to those who need our support and friendship.

The Lord's Prayer: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen.

Apostles' Creed

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth.
And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried. He descended into hell, the third day He rose again from the dead, He ascended into heaven, and sits at the right hand of God, the Father Almighty, from there He will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting. Amen.

Blessing

The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.
The Lord look upon you with favour, and give you peace. Amen.

Song

Shout To the Lord CCLI#1406918