



A New King

The life of Jesus
according to Matthew's Gospel

 St Stephen's
WILLOUGHBY

Wk 5

Sunday 3 March 2024

What's on tonight:

- Welcome
- Songs
- Bible Reading:
Matthew 5:33-48
(p. 969)
- Sermon
- Prayers
- Lord's Supper
- Song
- Apostles' Creed
- NCLS

Welcome to St Stephen's. We're glad you could join us this evening. We think there is no better place to be on a Sunday! We would love to hear how you found the evening. We would love to have you engage with the things happening in our church life and the gospel that is at the heart of everything we do. Perhaps you could take a moment and fill in the Connect Card or use the QR Code to participate?



This evening we do something unusual for our church life - we take a moment to complete a survey run by NCLS. We do this once a year to help give us a snapshot of our strengths and weaknesses as a church. We long to be made beautiful, diverse, and large by the gracious work of Christ. Our role is to be open to change, humble about our mistakes and treasuring the fruit of the Spirit we already experience. The survey helps us to do this. We appreciate you taking time to fill it in. If you have reflections on the experience please feel free to share them with the staff.

Most St Stephen's collection is received electronically.
BSB: 062 272
Account Number:
00490436

If you are a visitor please don't feel obliged to contribute financially.

Next Steps

Are you new? Catch up with [Prash](#) or [Jill](#) to share your story and hear about St Stephen's church life.

Been regularly coming? If you are a regular member of our church, we encourage you to attend our next [Belonging Course](#) which runs on the 10th of March from 12-3pm. Belonging is the gateway to our GaP Groups, serving and deeper connection with the community.

Got a question? Fill out a [connect card](#) to chat with a staff member.

Encountering The Lord's Supper

Participation in the Lord's Supper is for those who have professed faith in Jesus - it's a powerful and important symbol of the Christian message. As such we want to encourage those who are still exploring the Christian faith to feel free to remain in their seats when others move to the front to receive the Lord's Supper. During that time you may want to reflect on the sermon or Bible reading. You may also want to pray one of these prayers below.

Prayer for those searching for truth

Lord Jesus, you claim to be the way, the truth, and the life. Grant that I might be undaunted by the cost of following you as I consider the reasons for doing so. If what you claim is true, please guide me, teach me, and open to me who you are. Give me an understanding of you that leads to the life that you promise. Amen.

Prayer of belief

Lord Jesus, I admit that I am weaker and more sinful than I ever before believed, but through you I am more loved and accepted than I ever dared hope. I thank you for paying my debt, bearing my punishment on the cross, and offering forgiveness and new life. Knowing that you have been raised from the dead, I turn from my sins and receive you as Saviour and Lord. Amen.

Prayer for those struggling with sin

Lord Jesus, enable me to lay aside the sin that clings so closely, and run with perseverance the race set before me, looking to you, the pioneer and perfecter of my faith. Amen.

Prayers adapted from Redeemer Presbyterian Church, New York.

Participating in The Lord's Supper

Before we invite those participating in the Lord's Supper to take the bread and juice, Prash will help us reflect on Scripture and lead us in prayer. We want God's Word to shape how we participate in the Lord's Supper. The verses from the Bible will be shown on the screens as well as the prayers that we will pray together. After this, we will be invited to come up to the front steps to take the bread and the juice. Please form a line down the centre aisle, then take the available spot at the front steps where you will receive the bread first, and then the juice. You can then return to your seat via the side aisles. After everyone has received the Lord's Supper, we will be led in some further prayers.

The Apostles' Creed

The Apostles' Creed is a variant of an ancient baptismal confession known as the Old Roman Creed. The earliest form dates to AD 341.

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 is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty;
from there he shall come to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit;
the holy universal church;
the communion of saints;
the forgiveness of sins;
the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

Collect for the day

A 'Collect' is an Anglican prayer written in the 1600s and tailored for this day each year.

We ask you, Almighty God,
to look upon the desires of your humble servants' hearts,
and to stretch forth the right hand of your Majesty,
to be our defence against all our enemies;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

This is the prayer that Jesus taught his disciples to pray (Matthew 6:5-14).

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.

Sermon Notes

Justice & the Kingdom | Matthew 5:33-48

Preacher: Damien Clark

1. An unobtainable ideal?
2. Two interpretations of the law
3. Transforming our sense of justice
4. Putting it into practice

Gospel and Prayer (GaP) Group Study

1. While both are important, do you tend to find yourself drawn to issues of justice or issues of compassion more?

Read Matthew 5:33-48

Getting your head around the passage:

Use as many questions as you need to ensure you understand the passage's contents.

- A. Why are people encouraged not to swear an oath? What are they encouraged to do instead?
- B. What does Jesus encourage his disciples to do for an evil person?
- C. What are the different costly actions he encourages his disciples to enact?
- D. What are the characteristics of God revealed in these verses?
- E. What does God do for people according to Jesus in these verses?

2. In verse 48, Jesus encourages his disciples to 'be perfect'. Given the verses that lead up to this statement, what do you think that looks like?

3. Which aspects of these commands given by Jesus do you find difficult?

4. Consider some of these verses: Psalm 140:12, John 15:13, James 1:27, Jeremiah 22:3. How does this help us understand Jesus's teaching in this part of the Sermon on the Mount? What and to whom are our responsibilities for justice and compassion?

Read Isaiah's prophecy about Jesus in Isaiah 53.

5. How does Jesus live out his teaching according to the prophet's words about him?

6. How does meditation on Jesus's ministry for us enable us to embrace justice & compassion that is personally costly for us?

Prayer Time

Split into smaller groups:

1. Is your love for Christians, especially those in difficult situations, growing? Do you find yourself having a less judgmental heart? Share and pray for each other in this area.



GaP Group Reflection

Watch the video provided to your leader and consider the following questions:

- i. What is encouraging about the stories that Pippie shared with us?
- ii. How can your group commit to supporting these ministries in prayer?

Read the Bible with us!

1. How is God described/What is his character in this passage?
2. How are we encouraged to behave? When might you find this hard?
3. Ask God to connect your behaviour to his character.

Monday - [Matthew 5:33-37](#)

Tuesday - [James 1:27](#)

Wednesday - [Matthew 5:43-48](#)

Thursday - [Romans 15:1-3](#)

Friday - [1 Peter 3:13-18](#)

Notices

Alpha



Belonging

Joining a new church is a strange and wonderful experience. It's wonderful because this is a genuine expression of God's grace to us. It's strange because each church is filled with unique personalities and is situated in a unique context. We want every person to find a meaningful, fruitful and purposeful place in our church family. The Belonging Course is a great way to understand the history, direction and opportunities of our church. If you have not been to a Belonging Course please come along to our next one on Monday 10 March from 12-3pm. Lunch and afternoon tea are included. A kids program is also available.



Welcoming

Can you remember your 1st weeks at St Stephen's?
Many people say they enjoy a warm welcome from our church community. We want that experience to continue for every new person who visits us.

Perhaps you can help us by joining our [welcoming team](#)?

If you are interested in this ministry fill in the Connect Card and Jill, our Membership Pastor will be in touch.

Welcoming is the 1st taste of God's gospel and a priority for us.

What's Coming Up

10 March	Belonging Course
16 March	Emu Music Conference
17 March	Welcoming Team training
21 March	Bush Church Aid Connect Night
25 March	AGM

For more on what's happening this autumn at St Stephen's, visit st-stephens.com.au/autumn

Our Staff - Contact Us!



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