

GOD INTERRUPTS!

We Listen

**DIVINE INTERRUPTIONS,
HUMAN IMPLICATIONS**

www.ssuc.org.au

9 May 2021 with Rev. Jock Dunbar

God Speaks; We Listen (5)

Gathering with God

I gather with the people of God
in all places
and, through the Spirit,
throughout all time.
Christ is with us.
May God be praised and glorified
through our worship.
Through Christ,
Amen.

*...the life I now live
in the flesh
I live by faith in the
Son of God,
who loved me and
gave himself for me.*

Galatians 2:20

Song

Come one, come all

Prayer of adoration and confession

Loving God,
even those first believers found it hard to agree.
Some wanted things
to stay the way they were.
Others wanted to get rid of old rules and start afresh.
Help us, Lord, to listen to those who disagree with us,
to be gentle with those
whose views anger us
and to stand firm in what we believe you wish us to do.
Most of all may we remember
to love one another.
Amen.

Preparing for worship...

BEFORE you watch, spend a few minutes to settle yourself into a comfortable space.

Practice Box Breathing:
Breathe in for 4 seconds;
hold for 4;
breathe out for 4;
hold for 4; repeat.

While you breathe, remember that the word for 'Spirit' in Greek and Hebrew is also the word for 'breath'.

'and God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life...'
Gen 2:7

Our breathing is an act of prayer, worship, and praise.
The Breath is itself connection to God, the Divine.

Bible Reading

Galatians 1:13-17; 2:11-21

Reflection

How can anyone stand before God and not be judged by God as anything less than imperfect, selfish, and a sinner? What makes us worthy or righteous, since only God is righteous. This is the question that rests behind Paul's words and conflict here with Peter (Cephas) and with the church in the area of Galatia in modern day Turkey. Paul uses the word 'justified' to refer to the ability for one to stand before God and **not** be counted as a sinner by God. In my NRSV Bible it adds a note saying that another way to interpret the word for justified is 'reckoned as righteous'.

Will following the Law of Moses make me righteous before God? Will making others follow the Law make me righteous? Paul's answer is a resounding, 'No!' Only faith in Messiah Jesus can grant a person right standing before God because only Messiah Jesus has been counted as righteous by God. God grants this 'right standing' to all who would believe and put their faith in Messiah Jesus too, which is what Paul refers to as *grace*. It is only because God is gracious and loving that any are counted as righteous by God through Jesus. The effect of this faith in Christ in the believer is one of dying to the effort to make oneself earn or deserve justification, right-standing with God. This frees the believer for True/Eternal/Resurrection Life, hence Paul says, "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me." This becomes our pattern of living – dying to our False Self as Richard Rohr calls it; that part of us where our Ego rules, that thinks in terms of strong and weak, good and bad, in and out. Christ frees us through inviting us into daily dying, so that we might experience God's eternal life now because our worth, value and standing with God is not based on what we have or will do, but on what God has done in Jesus the Messiah for us, for everyone; for all creation and the entire universe.

Read the Galatians reading again, and I invite you to listen for how the Spirit is speaking to you. What words or phrases jump out to you? What is God using in the reading to invite you into prayer, to turn to God and know God?

Offering

*We are a gift of God given for God's glory and the good of the world;
we offer ourselves and what we have to share with and for others.*

Prayers of Intercession

Prayer concerns can be shared with the congregation by emailing to prayer@ssuc.org.au or ringing the church office on 3848 0793.



It is your truth alone, loving God,
which can change hearts,
your healing power
which can transform troubled souls,
your Spirit which can move mountains of
despair.

So we pray today, Lord,
for change in places where tradition
has a stranglehold on vision,
where fear prevents
the hope of a better future,
where injustice is ingrained
and the same voices shout the loudest.

Lord, let there be change.

We pray for transformation
in hearts left cold by hurt,
in lives destroyed by loneliness,
in bodies held to ransom by pain
and souls crying out for relief.

Lord, let there be transformation.

We pray for healing
for those troubled in body, mind and spirit.
May they know your presence
in the comfort of others
and in your timeless promises
made real in Christ Jesus, our Saviour.

Lord, let there be healing.

We pray for movement, Lord,
in our churches
that the past may not
dictate the present or the possible,
in our communities
that ingrained opinions
may be challenged and shaken,
in our world
that reconciliation and peace
may become an achievable reality
and not just a dream for the hopeful.

Lord, let there be movement.

And we pray, Lord, for ourselves,
here in this congregation,
that we may together offer
help, hope and encouragement
to one another and to those in need.
And may you continue to meet us, Lord,
along the pathways of life
that our faith may be strengthened
making us worthy workers for the kingdom.
Through Christ,
Amen.

A Sending Out Prayer

Loved equally by God,
Justified by faith in Christ,
and drawn together by the power of the Holy Spirit.
May we go from this time of worship in peace,
to love and to serve all.
May the blessing of these three, be with you all,
now and always.

Song

Who you say I am