

Reflection - 3rd Sunday after Pentecost  
21/06/2020  
St Cuthbert's Anglican Church – Tweed Heads

Genesis 21: 8-21	Abraham and his offspring
Psalms 86:1-10,16-17	Lord hear my cry, because you are God
Romans 6: 1-11	As Christians we are to be Dead to Sin And alive to God in Christ Jesus
Matt 10:24-39	God protects those who hold fast Jesus Those who find their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for Jesus' sake will find it.

### Introduction

Our sentence of scripture for today, comes directly from our Gospel reading:-

Those who find their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for Jesus' sake will find it.  
Matthew 10.39

At the heart of the Christian faith is that we give up our being the ruler of our own lives, and hand the ruling over to Jesus. We see this symbolism of death and new life in the Sacrament of Christian Initiation – Baptism.

Baptism is Dying – Going under the water / drowning / Losing your Life for Jesus sake.  
Baptism is New Life – Coming out of the water / resurrection / Finding your Life in Jesus.

Today I would like to look at these two aspects from the sentence of Scripture.

### Baptism is Dying

It may seem strange to you to think of Baptism as dying. Often we baptize babies who have only just been born, but baptism is about turning away from sin and selfishness, and turning toward Jesus, so there must be a death or turning away from our own desires before there can be a turning to the desires of God.

Baptism is a Sacrament. The definition of a sacrament is that it is an outward and physical sign of an inward and spiritual grace.

The outward and physical sign of this first part is going under the water, drowning.

The inward and spiritual grace is about saying you accept what Jesus has done for you on the Cross, and that you will follow Him all your life.

As Christians we must surrender ourselves to God.

When Jesus was asked what the Greatest Commandment was, this is how he replied:-

Jesus answered, "The first is, 'Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one; <sup>30</sup> you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.' <sup>31</sup> The second is this, 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these." (Mark 12:29-31)

In one sense it is easy to say ok I can do that, but when we think about these commands, they are about putting God first. If we really think about them, they are very difficult. In fact, we often quite naturally want to put ourselves first.

In the next chapter of Romans from our reading today (Romans 7:14-25) St Paul talks about his struggle, or inner conflict, which I believe is a part of our human condition. We seem drawn not to God's will, but to our own.

But as Christians we know we are called to put God first.

So what does doing this do for us?

In our reading today from Paul's letter to the Romans (6:4) it says:-

<sup>4</sup> Therefore we have been buried with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.

### Baptism is New Life

All the talk of dying and drowning seems quite sad, but it is in doing this, we get to walk in Newness of Life.

The outward and physical sign of this second part is coming out of the water, and the inward and spiritual grace is resurrection, new life.

God loves us so much he wanted to provide a way for us to be in relationship with him. – To do this Jesus came to the earth as one of us.

If we have accepted Jesus then we can know God's peace, a peace which passes all understanding. Those first disciples of Jesus were so convinced, so encouraged by his resurrection, and his promise that he would never leave them, that they couldn't keep quiet about it. This "New Life" was bursting forth out of them.

As Christians, we have the assurance of Forgiveness. As Christians we know we are created in the image of God, and we know that we are created to live in relationship with God. Jesus provided that to his first followers and he provides it to all who would follow him now.

We hear in today's gospel reading from Matthew that it will not necessarily be easy, but we know that it will definitely be worth it.

## Example of Crosses

Sometimes, even though we have accepted what Jesus has done for us we don't really grasp the significance of it, or the significance wears off because of all the other things in our lives, so I'd like to share an example with you to maybe help highlight the difference accepting Jesus does for our lives.

The example is of two wooden holding crosses, and it works better if you can feel them in your hands, but I'm sure you'll get the picture.

The first cross was made when I saw some others, and thought I would like to make one. I just had a hack saw and some coarse sand paper, and when I finished I thought I'd done a pretty good job.

The second cross was made after I'd joined a woodworking club, and learned how to use a scroll saw and an upright bobbin sander and discovered you could buy very fine sandpaper. I also learned about different varnishes waxes and oils that could be used to finish timber.

Both were made from bits of wood. The one I made before I joined the woodworking club, was still a holding cross but I have to admit, after I'd compared it to the second one it looked and felt pretty ordinary. I didn't know how good a cross could look and feel. It wasn't until I'd made the second cross that I realised the difference.

All analogies are just that, examples to help us understand things, but accepting Jesus should bring about a transformation in our lives. Not just like from a bit of wood to the first cross, but one like the second cross.

## Conclusion

Today we have looked at the scripture:-

Those who find their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for Jesus' sake will find it.

I hope and pray that we, as parishioners at St Cuthbert's Tweed Heads, will continue to die daily to ourselves, so that we may grow in living the "New life in Christ" that we have been called into. And I pray that as we walk in this "New Life" those around us will see it, and also be drawn to Jesus. Amen.