



# ON THIS ROCK

HE WILL BUILD

VISION 2020



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**Our mission** is to build a community of grace  
committed to making disciples of Jesus.

**Our vision** is to be a faithful, adventurous and compassionate  
church with an expanding influence on communities, cities  
and nations with the hope and love of God.

## WELCOME

I am really excited about our current series called *"On This Rock...He will Build"*, as it launches us into the final year of our 2020 Mission and Vision. It also captures fully the journey we have been on since 2016, when we first made the decision to focus all our efforts on playing a role in the expansion of God's kingdom. Since that time we have reminded people that everyone is needed, everyone is valuable and the gifts and skills of everyone are a key part of this journey.

A consequence of this is that each year we have taken time out to study God's word in our LifeGroups. The focus has been intentionally on Matthew's Gospel. The reason being that it is in this gospel we all see clearly the heart of God and his desire, through His Son Jesus, to expand His kingdom on earth through His church.

For our current series we will be digging deeper into God's heart, as

we look at Matthew's Gospel, chapters 14 to 16. Over the next seven weeks we will all discover, not only what our Lord is doing in building His church (Matt 16:18), but also the role He calls us to play, as His disciples, in taking up our cross as we follow Him (Matt 16:24). I encourage you, once again, to familiarise yourself with our Mission and Vision, and in particular, our Big Hairy Audacious Prayers (Page 10 of our 2020 Vision book).

Finally, I am thankful to God for all of you and especially our LifeGroup leaders. My own prayer continues to be that God will use us all in providing hope, not only for ourselves, but also for our future generations.

Ian Barnett

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ian Barnett", with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Senior Minister

# THE KINGDOM LIFE

## MATTHEW 14:1-12

The Kingdom of God can be a threat to the people in power. John was a threat to Herod politically, so Herod had him arrested to counter his influence with the people. Desiring popularity, over truth and righteousness, people will often resort to force and violence and other means against those who question their ways. King Herod was distressed (v.9), yet he still carried out the beheading of John. There is little doubt that what we are seeing in 2019 is

an ongoing attack against freedom that we have enjoyed for centuries. More and more people around the world are experiencing violence and persecution for living out the way of God.

The growing reality is that being a follower of Jesus can and will place us in situations that may lead to distress and even death. There is a cost for following Jesus.

1. To remind us of the context of unbelief surrounding today's passage read Matt. 13:53-58. Why did these people in Nazareth have such a strong negative reaction to Him? Why does this still happen today? Have you had a personal experience similar to this?

2. Do some research on "Herod the Tetrarch" and "Herod the Great". What was he (in)famous for? Who was "Philip" (v.3)? Why was John arrested and imprisoned? What was Herodias' role in all of this? (See Mark 6:19-20).

3. John the Baptist has been previously described as the prophet Elijah (Matt 11:14). Look up 1 Kings 18. What was it that both Elijah and John the Baptist did that led them into trouble?

4. Why is "sin" such a sensitive topic in our culture? Can you think of any examples of people raising the issue of sin, and finding it costly?

5. "John the Baptist's beheading was not only a flashback in Matthew's narrative, but was also a foreshadowing of Jesus' crucifixion" (*France, The Gospel of Matthew, 522*). What do you think this means?

6. What is there about the passage this week that you might recognise as God speaking to you about your situation? Share something with your group.

### Pray

Pray for the preaching of God's word | Pray for the church family of Figtree | Pray for persecuted Christians

# THE KING CARES

## MATTHEW 14:13-36

There are two parts here in this section and in both parts we notice that even though Jesus needed time alone, He did not let His needs stifle His compassion for others. Verse 22 is a link for the feeding of the 5000 thousand and the walking on water scene. Jesus' days were always full. In the feeding parable, Jesus responded to the needs of the people, not just their spiritual needs, but curing their diseases and feeding their hunger too. We see that He can meet any need no matter how impossible the circumstances. When we trust Him and act in service, even getting out of the boat, He is there and we will give us the strength and resources that we require. Jesus calls us to come to Him, regardless of our difficulties or circumstances. The key is to remember who Jesus is.

### Matthew 14:13-21

1. In verse 13 what did Jesus hear about? What is His response? Do you think it is a reasonable response? What might your response have been in similar circumstances?
2. Jesus' 'withdrawing' is then interrupted. How does Jesus respond to being interrupted? How do you cope with being interrupted? Do you respond in the same way?
3. What do you think the disciples would have learned from this episode? How might verse 14 have changed the disciples? Was verse 15 an example of the disciples' compassion OR an example of their lack of faith?

4. Jesus told His disciples, "you give them something to eat" (v.16). What do you think Jesus wanted them to know about themselves? What is the whole point of the 'Feeding of the Five Thousand'? (See also John 6:35)

### Matthew 14:22-46

5. Jesus' actions seem urgent - (the disciples are made to get into the boat - the crowd is dismissed). Why the urgency? (See also John 6:14-15)
6. Why do you think Jesus wanted to/needed to pray by Himself? Do you ever feel that urgency to pray? What is there in this, for us to learn about prayer?
7. What does this 'Jesus walking on the water' reveal about Jesus AND us, as we face fears?

### Pray

Pray for those who struggle | Pray for the Mission and Vision of FAC

# THE KING'S CHALLENGE

## MATTHEW 15:1-20

Do you notice how many times Jesus used examples of needy people or of people's use of their resources, income, and treasure to teach a lesson? The point of Jesus' lesson here is that we are not to be selective about what portions of God's Word we choose to obey, while allowing our religious or human traditions to take precedence.

For the Pharisees, by focusing on their traditions they were able to select the commands they would obey, thus being able to neglect some of its clear directions. They lived with the outward appearance of purity, while their hearts and attitudes were foul (v.7-9). What we show outwardly is an expression of our inner attitudes and desires.

1. What lies behind the Jewish leaders asking their question in verse 2? How does Jesus answer (v.3)? Can you identify the sources of competition to the Bible that exist in your life and in the world?

2. Verses 4-6 illustrates the point of verse 3. What is all that about? Jesus exalts the authority of God's Word as an antidote to accepting man-made authority. How might we too exalt the Word of God - by doing more than just giving it 'lip service'? (There are many examples but see 1 Peter 2:1-12). How might this help us?

3. Take a moment to look up the definition of the word 'hypocrisy'. What would you say it means in your own words?

4. Jesus quotes from Isaiah in verses 8-9. How does that support his charge of hypocrisy?

5. What areas might we fall into the trap of hypocrisy? Are you aware of any hypocrisy in your life? How do we recognise it?

6. Jesus addressed different groups in different ways (v. 1, 10, 12). Why is this do you think? Is Jesus harder on some, more than others? Why?

7. Jesus teaches that holiness comes from our heart. Practically, how might we cultivate such holiness? (See Proverbs 2:1-5; Romans 6:19-23; 1 Thess 4:3-8; Hebrews 12:14). What practical tips regarding holiness can we glean from these verses?

### Pray

Pray for those in need | Pray for generous hearts expressed on Gift Day

# THE KING'S MISSION

## MATTHEW 15:21-28

It is often hard to get one's head around this part of God's word. Yet what Jesus saw was 'great faith' in the Canaanite Woman. It does not imply a large quantity of faith, but an unshakeable determination to trust God's Word and will against all odds. This woman's openness to Jesus' identity and mission allowed His healing ministry to operate in her situation. Maybe our desperation moves us to call out to Jesus, "Lord have mercy on me"

(v.22). Yes, Jesus was going about His mission to the lost sheep of the house of Israel (Matt 10:5-6). But He reminds His hearers that God's promises would first be fulfilled among Abraham's descendants, through whom the whole world would be blessed (Genesis 12:3 & 17:3-8). The faith of this woman offers hope to men and women of every generation. Jesus is the Compassionate King.

1. Review last week's passage (Matthew 15:1-20). What is going on in those verses? (See Mark 7:6-7 & Mark 7:20-23)

2. Now, glance over verses 21-28 again (today's passage). If Jesus' actions are deliberate and planned - not random; why do you think He has travelled into the region of Tyre and Sidon (about 160 km away) from the Lake of Galilee?

3. What do you think the 'Pharisees and teachers of the law' (Matthew 15:1) would have said about Jesus going to that Gentile region?

4. What do we learn about the woman in this passage? What does she desire? What do we learn about Jesus? What is He trying to teach His disciples?

5. In Matthew's gospel there are only two people praised by Jesus for their faith - this woman and one other. Who was it? (See Matthew 8:5-13). What do they have in common? What glimpse do they give us into God's big picture?

6. Like this Gentile Canaanite woman, what unlikely converts has God placed around you? Do you doubt God's power and mercy to work in the lives of these people?

7. Jesus goes out of His way 160kms to heal this Canaanite woman's daughter. Are you aware of God 'going out of His way' for you? Describe to your LifeGroup how this was for you.

### Pray

Pray for the lost | Pray for a new decade of ministry

# THE KINGDOM IS FOR EVERYONE

## MATTHEW 15:29-39

The coming of God's Kingdom breaks down all social barriers and transforms all aspects of life. Jesus' Kingdom isn't just a spiritual reality. Once again we see that our deepest needs are met and transformed. God's blessing moves to those willing to admit their need and seek His righteousness. In this passage Jesus performs many miracles, authenticating His message that the Kingdom of God had arrived. More and more Gentiles were experiencing the same fullness of the kingdom as the Jews...their lame walk, blind see, deaf hear and the hungry are being fed. God's Kingdom has truly arrived and it is for all people.

1. Having read through the passage, did anything 'jump out at you'?
2. Do you feel like you have read about a miraculous feeding like this already? List all the differences between this passage and Matthew 14:13-21.
3. Who was it that was concerned about the people's hunger? What does that tell you?

4. We can imagine the disciples wondering if Jesus will feed the hungry of this Gentile crowd as He did with the Jewish people. What was Peter's mindset regarding Gentiles? He needed the vision of Acts 10:9-15 to convince him otherwise. How does Acts 10:15 apply to today's passage? Peter's prejudice was hindering the spread of the Gospel. Do you have any prejudices hindering your Gospel proclamation?

5. How does this passage impact on your views of world mission?
6. Describe what it is going to be like when God's Kingdom is fully implemented. (See Revelation 19:6-10; Isaiah 25:6-12 and Revelation 5:9.)
7. What is the main lesson that you have learned from this passage today?

### Pray

Pray for the spreading of the gospel | Pray that we may accept those who are different

# THE KINGDOM SIGNS

## MATTHEW 16:1-12

So it really begins... *"The Pharisees and Sadducees came to Jesus and tested Him by asking Him to show them a sign from heaven".* Throughout this chapter, Matthew, the author, will call his readers to view Jesus from God's perspective. Leaders wanted signs of who Jesus was. Still today, before we pass our lives over to Jesus, (in belief and Lordship) we only want to accept Him on our terms. Jesus was uncompromising, the two groups mentioned above, when they perceived a threat to their authority would form an alliance... a coalition. They wished to trip Jesus up. He rightly called them to account and told them directly about the sign they had already received and still ignored. We are reminded in this narrative that God is faithful and that we are called to live a life of balance - attending to needs and trusting in God's care.

1. Do some research on 'Pharisees' and 'Sadducees' What did you discover? How are they different? What might their 'yeast' be? (v.12 tells us 'teaching, but go deeper, what was this teaching that the disciples had to be warned against?)
2. What type of behaviour and attitudes would we have to display to make us like the Pharisees and Sadducees?

3. What miracle ("a sign from heaven" v.1) do you think the Pharisees and Sadducees were expecting from Jesus? What do you think would have convinced them that Jesus was the expected Messiah? (See Matthew 11:4-6).

4. How are verses 2-4 a criticism of the Pharisees and Sadducees? What is Jesus saying their problem is?

5. The Jewish leaders are described as 'blind guides' (Matthew 23:16). What is it that blinded them? Where does the 'yeast' fit into this?

6. What was Jesus' point in this series of questions to the disciples (v. 8-11)? Why are the disciples so slow in understanding? Is there an area or issue where you were slow in coming to an understanding? Why is that?

### Pray

Pray for the ministry team | Pray for LifeGroup leaders



# THE KING AND HIS KINGDOM

## MATTHEW 16:13-28

We have reached a high point in Matthew's gospel where we not only see that the door to the Kingdom will remain open until Jesus returns (Acts 1:11), but that Jesus is identified by Peter as the Son of the Living God (v.16). This is and should be understood as a **WOW statement**. Everything hangs and falls on this reality. Peter here is granted by Jesus to have authority to declare the terms of the Kingdom. He will do this by preaching the gospel (Acts 2 & 10). Peter stood in stark contrast to the Pharisees, who shut the door for people trying to enter (Matt 23:13). Here we see the King emphasising that He is about building His Kingdom and nothing will overcome it! This chapter is incredible. Just think that a moment ago, Jesus is commending Peter and now this same Peter is trying to hinder Jesus' mission. Jesus is direct, "Get behind me Satan". **Another WOW moment.**

1. Meditate on our reading today. Let it soak in. For you, what was the most challenging part of the reading? Why?
2. What is so significant about Peter's confession in v. 16? i.e. Why is it a big deal?
3. Discuss "And on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it." (v.18) How would you describe the church that Jesus is building?

4. Jesus' strategy changes after Peter's confession (v.21). Why is that do you think?

5. Why was Jesus' response to Peter so strong (v.23)?

6. What does 'taking up his (Jesus') cross' look like for you?

7. Is it possible for us to 'forfeit our soul' (v.26)? In what circumstances might we do that? What does it mean for our current priorities? What would it take to tempt you away from your faith?

8. Share with others in your group how and when you came to recognise Jesus as your Messiah. Spend some time thanking and praising Jesus for opening your eyes to the Gospel.

### Pray

Pray that we will pick up and carry our cross | Pray that Jesus continues to build His church

# 2019/2020 GOALS

Below are the specific goals that we launch at the beginning of 2019, which fully captures, our mission and vision and provides a further stepping stone into the church that we seek to be, as started on page 30 of our mission and vision book.

## Goal 1 - Everyone Relating

**? Have I tried to make someone known this week?**

- Every member engaged with other members beyond Sunday.
- Every member engaged with non-members for the purpose of life and mission.

## Goal 2 - Everyone Praying

**? Have I prayed with someone this week?**

- All ministers and ministries have prayer support.
- 10% of congregation to gather for prayer before each service.

## Goal 3 - Everyone Discipling

**? Where is God moving me on the Discipleship pathway this month?**

- Every FAC ministry is identified on the FAC discipleship pathway.
- Everyone in ministry is identified in a discipleship chain.

# KEY DATES

<b>SUNDAY</b> 3 NOVEMBER	<b>MINISTRY CELEBRATION EXHIBITION</b>  A day to celebrate and create a greater awareness of FAC ministries through exhibits, and to provide an opportunity to get involved.
<b>SUNDAY</b> 3 NOVEMBER	<b>9:30AM COMBINED SERVICE</b>  One service to come together as a single community, to celebrate what it means to belong to the church family here at FAC.
<b>SUNDAY</b> 1 DECEMBER	<b>COMMITMENT DAY</b>  Commitment Day is when we are asked to make a pledge decision of how we will give financially over the coming year; regular giving which enables FAC ministries to both continue and expand.



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