

Hope Sermon 29 June 2025

As part of the Australian Christian church we have been in a season of ministry drawing on the theme of Hope.

Indeed, our combined parishes are now called Hope Ginninderra.

Today as I address you for the final time I am here not because

- God led three hopeful Anglican ministers on a journey, (which he did) or
- because God had a plan that He has led us through, (which he did) or
- because the Anglican church is particularly good at change, which is sometimes isn't.

I am here, and so might I say are you, because at some time in the past we were all told about the HOPE that can be found in JESUS.

Our congregations and churches and indeed our denomination only exists because of the common Hope we have in God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

- It is a faith that allowed Abraham to leave everything he knew to follow God.
- It is a faith that allowed Moses to return to Egypt the place of his greatest failure to serve God's will.
- It is a faith that led Danial into the lion's den.
- It is a faith that heard a young woman say, "Let it happen to me as you have said" (Luke 1:38) moments after meeting an angel for the first time.
- It is a faith that allows the 12 Disciples to go into the countryside with "no staff, nor bag, nor bread, nor money—not even an extra tunic," (Luke 9:3)

- It is a faith that sets us free from what Paul calls the works of the flesh and produces in us the Fruit of the Spirit.

Our Hope in Jesus is all that matters... because

It is a HOPE like no other!

Can I over sell this Hope we have through Jesus?

I don't think so.

It is a HOPE so different from anything the world offers us because it is so entirely dependent on God that we need bring only faith to table.

Our faith does not require us to muster what we don't have or to manufacture something we haven't seen.

We are called to simply bring what we have, because what you have in the hands of our God it is enough.

I still remember some 30 years ago when I realised that this HOPE in Jesus was even for the likes of me.

I cannot describe the release, the comfort or the joy that realisation gave me.

In just a few months I hope to be ministering in one of the darkest and most abandoned places I know of in Australia.

The Maximum-security wing of the Goulburn Correctional Centre.

Slide with Prison Pictures

Most of the men I will meet will not be leaving that place for decades, if at all.

Can you imagine a life where, EVERYTHING in your life is controlled and determined by someone else.

Regardless of the justice involved the lostness and despair and fear are very real.

So why would Corrections NSW want a bunch of Christians to go there once a fortnight.

What can be achieved in a place where the circumstances don't change... where for many they may never change?

Because that is not Gods truth!

HOPE Changes EVERYTHING!

Today's psalm (Ps 16:5-9) tells us that when the Lord becomes our chosen portion

- HE holds my lot (my everything).
- He places the boundary lines in pleasant places;
- He gives me a goodly heritage.
- He gives me counsel in the night;
- He instructs my heart
- And as a result my heart is glad, and my soul rejoices; my body rests secure.

Even the NSW Corrections Service knows... through decades of experience that...

HOPE... HOPE in Jesus... changes everything.

How many of you noticed that phrase on the flag out front?

HOPE CHANGES EVERYTHING!

I encourage you to fly that flag whenever these doors are open.

There is no greater example of this truth than the last supper.

Next slide with last supper Pictures

From that table Jesus gave Hope to people who

- would betray him,
- deny him,
- hid in fear in next day.

But from those seeds of Hope came the Christian.

You and I come from a long tradition of inadequate, cracked pots who hold the light of Christ not for ourselves but for someone else.

Soon we will also gather around a communion table, as Jesus instructed us, to remember the Hope we have in our Lord and Saviour.

And in a little while after that we will gather around different tables with food and drink that someone else has bought for you to share.

We have an abundant God.

- HIS Hope is limitless.
- His Hope is sufficient for all, persons and situations.
- At HIS table we do not survive on scraps with only just enough.

So today I want to introduce you to the theology of leftovers...

The disciples collected left overs after Jesus fed more than 5 thousand people starting with just a few loaves and fishes.

How many people do you think have gathered around a communion table in the last 2000 years?

The theology of left overs is an invitation for us to build bigger tables not higher fences.

A theology that invites

- the lost, the broken,
- the confused, the abandoned
- to a table of abundance, where NO ONE misses out.

Where every success and every failure,

- every act of obedience, every act of rebellion,
- is charged with possibility in the hands of Jesus.

Jesus wastes nothing that we bring.

No matter what we bring He transforms and multiplies.

A theology of leftovers means we take the same approach to sharing the gospel that we might take when we set the table to celebrate with our families, for our friends, our co-workers, our neighbours!

We don't skimp.

We don't plan to run out just as the last person is full.

NO!

We plan to have more than we need. We anticipate leftovers.

And its not wasteful.

Its generous.

It's a expression of love and devotion to those who we care about, or are caring for.

The truth is that the only thing that matters is our hope in Jesus.

Jesus is the real meal:

- he is what we need,
- what everyone hungers for.
- what we long for
- the only thing that truly satisfies.

Next Slide

I urge you will go out to the street corners and invite everyone you see.

- The good and the bad
- The kind and the cruel
- The deserving and the undeserving.

And invite them to the banquet of the Lord... Because someone did that for each of us

and look what changed!.

My prayer for you and I... not the parish... not the Church... because neither of those things exists without US.

My prayer for us is that Jesus, will renew in us the expectation that HE is still the same

- miracle-working,
- life-shaping,
- freedom-giving
- God of Scripture?
- When first we HOPED he was.

Father, will you give us such HOPE in Jesus

- that we will display His abundance, His Grace, His love, His forgiveness
- that the entire community of Northwest Belconnen will come to feast with us at the table of the Lord.

Start the music video... build volume as I finish

I want to finish now and to do so as I began some 5 years ago at my induction at St Pauls in Spence by playing a song that reminds me of why I am alive in Christ

Feel free to sit or stand, clap or even stamp your feet or even sing along...