

Home Group notes for the week following Sunday 16th November 2014

23rd SUNDAY AFTER PENTACOST

As we Gather

In every society there are those who resist change and try to keep everything as it has always been; and there are those who are willing to risk change, seeing it as an opportunity for personal and community growth and development.

These two attitudes are also found in the church and seen in individual reactions to God

Reading Scripture PSALM 123 JUDGES 4 : 1 - 7 MATTHEW 25 : 14 - 30

Thinking Together

When we trust human strength and wisdom more than the promises of God, we try to control our lives (the known) without reference to God (the unknown). This leads to struggle and confusion as this attitude ultimately results in disobedience to God's commands and rebellion against His authority [Judges 4:1-7 and Psalm 51:4].

Have you ever made a fast decision without due consideration and prayer? Discuss
What was the outcome of this decision? Discuss
How did you feel about this outcome? Discuss

Acknowledging our sin and weakness is the first step to trust in God and recognition that generally people have little consideration for others, and their words and actions can be very hurtful at times [Psalm 123].

Only God is merciful when appealed to [Judges 4:1-3 John 17:1 Acts 7:55]. Trusting Him leads to a full and satisfying life, as grasping the opportunities / tasks / responsibilities He provides results in increasing opportunities for growth and development – both in the lives of individuals and the faith community / church [Judges 4: 4-7].

What recent service / ministry opportunity has come your way? Discuss
How did you react, and what has been the outcome? Discuss

God never asks more of us than we are able to give, and He equips us for every task He assigns us [Matthew 25:14-15]. Those who dislike / fear changes in their lives might hesitate or even refuse to become involved in God given tasks / ministries [Matthew 25:18]. Others see the advantages / benefits which result from change and grasp every opportunity open to them to please and honour God [Matthew 25:16-17 + 19-23].

Many who have limited ability and few talents may feel inadequate and think they cannot bring glory to God, yet the faith community / church in which they serve God faithfully, prospers, grows and achieves what it sets out to accomplish.

Do you know of someone who has served / is serving, God faithfully in spite of handicap or illness? Discuss

Individuals / faith communities who do not make use of God given talents for service / ministry stagnate; eventually suffering from the sorrow / pain of regret / remorse of lost opportunities, when they consider what “might have been” [Matthew 25:24-30].

**Have you ever regretted no doing / neglecting to do, something you felt called to do?
Discuss**

In Closing

When the servants of God fear life / responsibilities, and have not heart for ministry, even though not deliberately choosing evil, they are robbing the Master of service and spiritual increase (winning of souls and maturing disciples).

What is the outcome for the faith community / church when its members all respond faithfully to God’s call upon their lives?

PRAYER YOU MIGHT LIKE TO READ

God of the covenant, even when we fall into sin, your Spirit invites us to remember that you chose us to be your servant people.
Awaken us to the power of the gifts you pour into us for the good of creation, and grant that we may be trustworthy in all things, producing abundantly as we work to build your kingdom.
Though Christ our Lord. Amen

SOURCES CONSULTED IN PREPARING THESE NOTES

Barclay, William: The Daily Study Bible, revised edition, The Gospel of Matthew, volume 2

McGee, J. Vernon: ‘Joshua AND Judges’, Thru’ the Bible Books

Wiersbe, Warren W.: The Bible Expository Commentary, volume 1

Life Application Bible (NIV)

Spirit Filled Life Bible (New King James)