

With attendance being so erratic in this season of church life, it's quite difficult to get momentum when it comes to a series of connected messages. So at the risk of offending those who've been here for the last three weeks could I remind those who haven't been of some of the ground we've travelled thus far?

We're speaking at this time of the 5 habits of highly missional people. We began on 18 February:

Some years ago, and it could have been quite a few years ago we were talking, as you do, about what works in church life and what doesn't and one of the participants said something like this – it doesn't matter how full of the Holy Spirit you are or how gifted you are or what you've achieved or how successful or effective you perceive you are, all that matters is **'that you know Jesus and listen to his voice.'** Hold on to that thought.

I've forgotten the conversation, the time and place but I haven't forgotten those words. In a way they're a reflection of Paul's powerful statement in Philippians 3.

**But whatever were gains to me I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ – the righteousness that comes from God on the basis of faith. I want to know Christ – yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, and so, somehow, attaining to the resurrection from the dead.**

And connected to this what Jesus said in his prayer in John 17

**Now this is eternal life: that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.**

Personally I think Paul exhibited all the 5 Habits of Highly Missional people long before Michael Frost brought them to our attention. At the same time I'm glad Michael has.

#### THE THIRD HABIT OF A MISISONAL PERSON IS THIS:

**I will spend at least one period of the week learning to know Jesus.**

Knowing Jesus, learning to know Jesus; knowing you Jesus, knowing you; I have to say that I'm a Jesus person. Like a lot of my generation and older – that is people who are over 54 (the majority around here) I feel we grew up on a diet of the New Testament letters and the 10 commandments. Being a Christian was about what we didn't do – don't drink, don't smoke, don't dance, don't chew gum, don't listen to pop music (we wouldn't be permitted to listen to Hillsong, Vineyard etc.), don't gamble etc. etc. And I think this has marked many in my generation – they're often more into what they're against rather than what they're for.

Then I discovered Jesus, oh sure I knew he died for me and all that but Jesus became a real living person to me. And I suspect that's what's behind this habit.

We follow readings from the Old and New Testament most days (I'm not pretending to be something I'm not) and I always feel if there's not a reading from the gospels I'm missing Jesus. Today we read from John 3 - **But everyone who lives by the truth will come to the light, because they want others to know that God is really the one doing what they do, and also in Ephesians God planned for us to do good things and to live as he has always wanted us to live. That's why he sent Christ to make us what we are.**

**So the question is how do we learn Jesus?**

1. Spend time in the gospels. I really enjoyed reading Matthew to John sequentially as part of the New Testament Challenge. For that time, Jesus was a daily focus. I need to think about that in the future.
2. Read about Jesus. From books by Malcolm Muggeridge and John Stott to newer understandings like the Jesus I never knew by Philip Yancey. One I plan to read is 'Jesus through Middle Eastern Eyes'. And also books of people's experience of Jesus. Maybe I should produce a list of helpful books about Jesus but they're only ever an addition to the gospels.
3. What do some of the films about Jesus show us? Over the years I taught about Jesus in the school context the three I liked most were Jesus of Nazareth, the Jesus film and the Passion of the Christ. One that's little bit different is Jesus of Montreal. And the other thing to understand is that there are Jesus figures in so many movies.

The thing is we never learn about and of Jesus just for us. We learn of Jesus to know him and the power of his resurrection YES, but we learn in order to share him through our days – as we bless and eat with those who are yet to follow him. It's a habit to enable us to be missional people.

You'll hear Michael Frost use the expression 'we need to marinate ourselves in Jesus' – soak in him until his very presence and nature pervades who we are.

Michael Frost told the story of meeting a group of hard-core surfing enthusiasts and asking them who their favourite surfer of all time was. They said it was the Florida surfer, Kelly Slater, who has been crowned the world surfing champion a record 11 times. He was the youngest and the oldest to win the title.

When Michael asked them to tell him more about Kelly Slater they went bananas, regaling him with facts about Slater's life – where he grew up, what boards he used, which years he won titles, what movies and television shows he'd appeared in, which models and movie stars he'd dated and on and on. You know Richie McCaw stuff!

What if a neighbour or acquaintance was to ask you what you know about Jesus, what can we say; what would I say!

#### **THE FOURTH HABIT OF A MISSIONAL PERSON IS THIS:**

**I will spend at least one period of the week listening for the Spirit's voice**

I spoke of this at the annual meeting – the number of times when in Revelation Jesus said to John.

**Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches?** So we know that the Spirit speaks to churches.

On the Mount of Transfiguration God said:

**'This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased. Listen to him!' (Matthew 17:5)**

**Again Jesus called the crowd to him and said, 'Listen to me, everyone, and understand this. (Mark 7:14)**

Hear what the Spirit says to the churches

Listen to him

Listen to me

Jesus speaks through his Spirit today – that's why he can speak to many at the same time.

Four principles:

1. Set aside a designated time – begin with once a week, not speaking of daily quiet time here. Time for you and the triune God.
2. Eliminate distractions. This is tough for those surrounded by noise, TV, computer, phones, music, touch, sound, sight, smell and taste; others' written words. Find a comfortable position. I've tried this twice recently - it's tough but worthwhile.
3. Let God speak through the Spirit.
4. Seek to follow what the Spirit says.

It's a learning time especially if you're an activist.

The aim of all this is to live a godly, intriguing, socially adventurous and joyous life before others. I suspect this is what we're to be.

Prayer

Bruce – worship

Roly speaks

Conclude with, 'All I once held dear'