

Prayer & Self Denial 2018 - 'Made New'

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Julian Doorey - Sermon - Week 2 - A New Perspective... on Mission - 17-6-18**(Colossians 1:15-20)****Prayer****Introduction**

Welcome to the 2nd week of our NZ Baptist Mission 'Prayer and Self Denial' (PSD). This is our annual one month focus on global physical and spiritual needs and our response to that. NZ Baptists have worked overseas since about 1885. Currently we work in India, Bangladesh, Thailand, Macau and East Asia. The purpose of PSD is to raise awareness, prayer and funds for overseas mission. Our church logo: Continuing the work of Jesus in the world... It's exciting!

2 This year's theme is 'Made New', taken from 2 Cor 5:17 '[Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come; the old is gone, the new is here](#)'. From that theme our 4 messages are: (i) A new spirit, (ii) A new perspective, (iii) A new generation, (iv) A new generosity.

3 This year's receptacle for collecting our offering (more symbolic these days with internet banking) is a small silver bowl. They are used in the Thai New Year festival 'Songkran' to pour water over people's hands to symbolically demonstrate honour and respect. Songkran has been adopted by the Thai church to promote the love and word of God in a familiar and culturally appropriate way. As people celebrate cleansing by the water, the church teaches we can be cleansed by Jesus' blood.

4 **GEMS**
A gem is a precious stone, especially when cut and polished, or engraved. A gem can also be used to describe an outstanding person or thing. Let's look at some other GEMS in a video.

[>> Play >> PSD 2018 - Vid - Week 2 - A New Perspective - 2m 17s](#)

5 In this video we visit Carley at GEMS (Golgotha English Medium School) in Dhaka, Bangladesh. Carley shares her thanks for the work of God amongst her students. They are mostly Mu***** or Hi****, but they know that every time they come to school, they enter a place where they encounter Jesus and his love. Lives are changing for the better as the students recognise their worth to God.

Education is greatly valued in Asia and NZBMS uses education as a means to speak truth into lives. GEMS was set up 12 years ago, to provide excellent education, at an affordable price, in a God honouring atmosphere. Widely respected in the community, GEMS often has parents lining up to enrol their children. God is glorified within the school walls, but also present and glorified outside.

GEMS shows a new perspective on mission, or perhaps reinforces an old one. Some people think mission *only* involves preaching the gospel, sharing our faith verbally, and getting people to read the Bible. While mission absolutely does include these things, it includes so much more. Let's look at a Bible passage, not typically used to support what we call mission: Colossians 1:15-20.

Colossians mission (Col 1:15-20)

Paul is writing to a young church in Colosse from prison (house arrest) in Rome, at the end of his mission journeys about AD 60 (Acts 28). Epaphras started the church, not Paul. Epaphras has told Paul of problems / heresies in the Colossian church. Paul responds by writing to the church, giving comfort and correction. We aren't told what the heresy is, but we greatly benefit from Paul's letter.

6 Christ's supremacy in creation (Col 1:15-17) - 1st 3 verses

¹⁵ The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. ¹⁶ For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. ¹⁷ He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. (TNIV)

The Message puts it this way...

¹⁵⁻¹⁷ We look at this Son and see the God who cannot be seen. We look at this Son and see God's original purpose in everything created. For everything, absolutely everything, above and below, visible and invisible, rank after rank after rank of angels - everything got started in him and finds its purpose in him. He was there before any of it came into existence and holds it all together right up to this moment. (MSG)

We learn that:

- v15. Jesus is God. What is God like? Look at Jesus. Learn Jesus (3rd Habit).
- v15. Jesus is the first born over all creation, so has rights over all creation. He's in charge.
- v16. Jesus created all things. 7 times in 6 vs - speaks of all creation / all things / everything.
- v17. Jesus is before all things. He was begotten not created. Jesus always existed.
- v17. Jesus holds all things together. Jesus really likes sustainable development.

7 Jesus holds all things / every part of creation together??? I don't think we can fully comprehend what this means and how it all works. All things = Physical - humans, animals, plants, objects, houses, roads... Philosophical - ideas, thoughts, knowledge, science... Vocational - education, medicine, engineering, trades, business, computers, planning, goods and services, farming, cropping... Cultural - music, art, literature, leisure, sport...

8 Christ's supremacy in redemption (Col 1:18-20) - 2nd 3 verses

¹⁸ And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. ¹⁹ For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, ²⁰ and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross. (TNIV)

The Message puts it this way...

¹⁸⁻²⁰ And when it comes to the church, he organizes and holds it together, like a head does a body. He was supreme in the beginning and - leading the resurrection parade - he is supreme in the end. From beginning to end he's there, towering far above everything, everyone. So spacious is he, so roomy, that everything of God finds its proper place in him without crowding. Not only that, but all the broken and dislocated pieces of the universe - people and things, animals and atoms - get properly fixed and fit together in vibrant harmonies, all because of his death, his blood that poured down from the cross. (MSG)

We learn that:

- v18. Jesus is head of the church. Not any human, although obviously the church is for humans.
- v18. Jesus was the first human to rise from the dead with an eternal body. First fruits for us.
- v19. Jesus contained the fullness of deity in a body. Totality of God's power and attributes.
- v20. Jesus reconciles all things to God by his death on the cross. Peace is made possible.

9 Jesus reconciles all things on earth and in heaven to God??? What does this mean? How does it work? Every part of creation is to somehow be reconciled to God. We can't fully comprehend this.

A new perspective - on mission

10 I want to suggest that this Colossians passage has huge ramifications for mission.

1. God is interested in all of creation - spiritual, physical, philosophical, vocational, cultural thing.

2. The world (life outside Christianity) is not all good and not all bad. The world is full of God's creative potential, but marred by sin. Some people present an overly negative view of the world, while enjoying all its benefits. God created us to be real people living in a real world.
3. Mission calls us to interact with the Bible and the world. We need to exegete (interpret) the Bible and exegete (interpret) the world. The Bible alone will result in a church disconnected from the world, a holy huddle, useless for mission. The world alone will just stay the world. But the Bible applied to the world will create a culturally contextualised church.
4. Cavy Baptist mission slogan says we are 'Continuing the work of Jesus in the world'. Jesus is reconciling all things to God (somehow) through the death of Jesus on the cross.
5. Following Jesus into mission therefore, calls all person to use their gifts and skills to reconcile all things to God. This includes: ideas, thoughts, knowledge, science; education, medicine, engineering, trades, business, computers, planning, goods and services, farming, cropping; music, art, literature, leisure, sport... and so on... Who have I missed?

Where do we go from here? What do we do with this mission perspective? It's our PSD overseas mission month, so let's talk about Caversham Baptist and overseas mission.

A new perspective - on Caversham Baptist and overseas mission

11 What's your perspective on overseas mission? I suggest that, we're called to either go and work overseas in mission or support overseas mission (prayer, self denial, finance). Any other options?

(1) Who will go overseas?

12 When I look at the church overseas mission board (Mornington Baptist & Caversham Baptist) I see 21 people departed for overseas mission, over a period of 74 years. That works out at 1 person every 3.5 years. It's been 13 years since the last person. Who will it be? In the 1970s, NZ was apparently famous (in mission circles) for sending the largest number of missionaries per capita. This is no longer the case. Based on Christian population, South Korea sends 140 per 100,000 Christians, while NZ sends 80 per 100,000. The centre of Christianity has moved (and rapidly) from the West to Asia, Africa and South America. When we worked in Bangladesh, there were lots of Korean Christians involved in mission - by way of church, or business or development. Who will go overseas?

(2) Who will support overseas mission (prayer, self denial, finance)?

Actually very few people seriously contemplate going overseas for mission. So the bulk of us are called to do mission here, and support overseas mission (prayer, self denial and finance).

13 Prayer: We have 3 slots per day, 5 days per week, over 4 weeks, providing 60 prayer opportunities. All home group leaders have been offered PSD resources if they wish to use them. Will you pray?

Self denial: The idea of self denial is to give us an experience of going without something. It helps us to identify (usually in some small way) with most of the world who are always going without something, in fact many somethings. About 2 billion people live on \$US 2.50 per day. Going without something can also be used to save money, helping to raise funds for overseas mission. I hope every person here goes without something during this month. Last Sunday our family talked about our self denial. Our 4 responses were: no biscuits or lollies, no TV or remote control use, no extra fast food, and early nights in bed by midnight. After major... Will you self deny?

>> [Interview: Julie Blair about eating rice once per week. What, why, when, who?](#)

Finance: Now we get to the biggest taboo subject in church. Although we live in a very monetised world, being bombarded with seductive opportunities to spend, consume, acquire and experience, we shy away from issues of money and lifestyle. I think money only comes up here at Cavy Baptist about 2x per year, (i) during PSD and (ii) again at the Christmas Appeal. Although we will need to do some serious funding talk for the earthquake upgrades needed. We are NOT related to the big tele-evangelists always asking for money. Did you see the recent US tele-evangelist who was requesting millions from his supporters to buy a

4th private jet to zoom around the world preaching the gospel. His justification was that if Jesus was alive on earth now, he would not be riding around on a donkey. However, I doubt he would spend too much time flying around in a Gulf Stream either. It's a pity it made our NZ main news. Returning to PSD, we have given the following amounts: 2014: \$12,650, 2015: \$11,000, 2016: \$9,070, 2017: \$10,500. We've been on a downward path. Last years included a large donation from outside the church. The church acts as a conduit for PSD giving. Every \$1 we give to PSD, will be sent directly to NZBMS to support overseas mission. I would love to see us give \$12,000 - (matching 2014). We have 112 people, couples or families with a church 'giving number'. Try 100 givers for easy maths. Try $\$12,000 / 100 = \120 per 100 givers. For some people this isn't much money, but for others, it's a lot. Try $\$12,000 / 50 = \240 per 50 givers. That's just to give some idea. Will you make a collective response and pledge / offering on 1 July?

(3) Global mission team

14 Finally we get to a really big issue and a key lacking in Cavy Baptist. Who will promote and hold the vision of overseas mission before us? Who will recruit, prepare, send, support, communicate and pray for Cavy Baptist overseas mission workers (& others)? We desperately need a Global Mission Team (previously called a Mission Committee). Will you be part of this?

Conclusion

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- Is God calling you to a new perspective (on mission) - using your skills and gifts to reconcile all things to God - through the death of Jesus on the cross?
 - Is God calling you to a new perspective (on overseas mission)...
 - to work overseas in mission eg: At GEMS school or somewhere else?
 - to help establish a Cavy Baptist Global Mission Team to promote, send and support overseas mission workers?

If you think / feel God has spoken to you about these things - please come and talk with me.

End