

## **Week starting Monday 16 September.**

### **1 John 5:1-5 Burdensome to beauty.**

On Sunday Gabrielle spoke to 1 John 5:1-5. The central verse he focused on was verse 3. “In fact, this is love for God: to keep his commands. And his commands are not burdensome,”

On Sunday afternoon I practised a four-part harmony with Steve, Jem and Greg. I enjoyed hearing our voices blend together as we practised together and played with who took one part and how we would split off and bring it back together. There were times we naturally began to rise, or crescendo, in our voices in response to what we were singing. We clearly were all enjoying the experience.

In these five verses, I can see the harmony of truth, one truth building on another, and then, together, it rises in the power of what it is declaring.

Q. Looking at this passage, what truths do you see?

We’ve all experienced someone singing who hasn’t quite got the pitch right (unless you are tone-deaf and can't tell!). When this occurs, the words of what they are singing are detracted from, and all you can “hear” is the incorrect pitch.

Q. What is the “truth” in this passage that, if you remove, would cause the commands of Jesus to move from beauty to becoming a burden?

Q. Can you remember a time in your life when a command of Jesus went from being a burden, something you felt you “had” to do, to something beautiful that you wanted to do? What caused the change in you?

1 John has a great focus on “truth”, it refers to it 11 times in five chapters. But the way it frames truth is a very Jewish view of truth that is rooted in what we do and not our Western view of truth that often reduces truth to something you know rather than something you live.

I was reading a book by John Lederach, called “Reconcile.” John was a world-renowned conflict negotiator and a Christian. He told a story of how he was part of a group developing a “master in conflict”. He said the certifying panel spoke about how many “seat hours” a student would have over the course. He said this comment, “It struck me as an extraordinary window into modern education...” He then went on to contrast “seat hours” with how Jesus taught truth.

Jesus walked everywhere and he walked in places that his disciples would *never have chosen to go on their own.*

- Walking into Samaria
- Walking and talking to a woman at a well in Samaria
- Walking an “extra mile” with someone who was exploiting you

- Walking to Zacchaeus, the chief tax collectors house

“Truth” for Jesus wasn’t just about knowing things in books, even though he knew the bible better than anyone. In fact, Jesus was highly critical of the Pharisees who “knew” the bible inside out but who didn’t practice the truth (John 5:39, Matthew 23:23).

John walked with Jesus. He was shocked, along with the other disciples, when they walked into Samaria. He walked around the crowd the day the disciples handed out the bread and fish to the 5,000. He walked with Jesus as they headed to Martha and Mary’s house, knowing Lazarus had died. In all this walking, Jesus was teaching them to live out of his truth.

Believing in Jesus brings us into a new life as a child of God, but *walking out his commands*. *Walking out his truth* is what grows us in knowing his love and growing in our trust of who he is.

John uses in 1 John a Greek word *poieō* pronounced poy-eh'-o. It is translated in various ways. But it means to *commit, practice, make and do*. John uses it this word 12 times in 1 John and its relationship to truth.

*If we claim to have fellowship with him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not **live out** the truth.* 1 John 1:6

*Dear children, do not let anyone lead you astray. The one who **does** what is right is righteous, just as he is righteous.* 1 John 3:7

*Dear friends, if we don’t feel guilty, we can come to God with bold confidence. And we will receive from him whatever we ask because we obey him and **do** the things that please him.* 1 John 3:21-22

On Sunday, as Steve, Greg, Jem, and I **practised**, we got better; we were in **harmony**. We were all encouraged, and one day, you might get to hear our song. But the growth came not by reading about singing or listening to others singing; it came by **practising together**.

You and I are not made to follow Jesus on our own. In fact, if we believe we can, I believe we’re giving into a **demonic delusion** that seeks to separate out who we are as children from God, from what we do.

### **Exercise.**

Brainstorm together all the commands of Jesus. Then, spend some time in silence. Which one is the Holy Spirit asking you to “practice”?

Share together and pray for each other.

Going from the “Burden” to the “Beauty” of his commands comes when we realise that as God’s children, Jesus' DNA that loves to fulfil the Father's will, is in us.