**DCF 191122 Getting Ready with Gratitude**

We are told in Matt 24:36 We don’t know when the end will be. ***36“But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only.*** No doubt in history we have seen terrible times when the world has been in chaos with millions dying in wars. But the evidence of the seals of Rev 6 is quickly becoming more visible.

Seal 1: There is a falling away of churches who refuse to stand against the murder of babies, and the mutilation of children with irreversible operations to change their genders. Parents and believers are being denied their rights to even pray for their own children.

Seal 2: We see daily the red horse of war and the countries of Russia and China come to mind. Violence even in the streets of Perth and suburbs has increased.

Seal 3: In Australia 5 years ago, 3.24 million people (13.6% of the population or over one in eight) were estimated to be living below the poverty line, after taking account of their housing costs. 774,000 children under the age of 15 (17.7% of all children or over one in six) were living below the poverty line. The situation has got much worse.

Seal 4: There is wide spread death by hunger, domestic violence, and disease. When we are told that ¼ of the earth dies by the black horse, nearly ½ of them is just from hunger. An estimated 50 million abortions are carried out throughout the world every year.

A total of 87,000 women were intentionally killed in 2017. More than half of them (58 per cent) 50,000 ̶ ̶ were killed by intimate partners or other family members, meaning that 137 women across the world are killed by a member of their own family every day. More than a third (30,000) of the women intentionally killed in 2017 were killed by their current or former intimate partner ̶ someone they would normally expect to trust.

Seal 5: 1 in 7 Christians are being persecuted. The media is the enemy of the church.

But we add to the signs of these times, 4 significant signs. In Dan 12:4 ***But you, Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book until the time of the end; many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase.”*** In our era travel by air across the world would have been unimaginable 200 years ago. And googling information was not thought of even 30 years ago. (In 1982, I was in-charge of computing at CCGS, and we had an 8K computer which cost the school $16,000). The third significant sign that we are very likely in end times is the return of the Jews to Jerusalem and Israel. ***Zech 8:7 ‘Behold, I will save My people from the land of the east and from the land of the west; 8I will bring them back, and they shall dwell in the midst of Jerusalem. They shall be My people and I will be their God, In truth and righteousness.’***

Stupidly, Australia has not agreed with the Bible that Jerusalem is the capital of Israel.

A 4th significant sign is the description of warfare in ***Zech 14:12 12And this shall be the plague with which the Lord will strike all the people who fought against Jerusalem: Their flesh shall dissolve while they stand on their feet, their eyes shall dissolve in their sockets,
and their tongues shall dissolve in their mouths.***

But regardless of whether we are right or wrong about the closeness of the return of Jesus, because we are the Bride, we must be ready. Readiness is not about being right or wrong – it is all about heart. In Rev 19:7 we read ***Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready.*** Jesus teaches us this when He tells us about this time in the history of the world. ***Matt 24: 29 Immediately AFTER the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.***

***…. V44 Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.***

So, God has given me 4 bed time exercises, to be done before I shut my eyes at night, which I have passed on to you. I strongly suggest you do them. Try it for a month. If it makes no impact on your walk with God, feel free to call me a stupid idiot. But if it makes you more ready for the return of Jesus – pass it on. The 4 exercises are:

* Thanks. Thank God for something from the day.
* Repent. Apologise for a sin that he has made you aware of. Search for it. There will be one.
* Serve. Ask God for some way you can serve Him tomorrow.
* Ask. Bring a petition to His throne. What is the thing that satan is using to batter you?

These 4 exercises allow us to focus on our relationship with God. ***Col 3:2 Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.***

THANKS:

* Stifles covetousness, grumpiness, jealousy,
* Anchors your positioning for God’s purpose – family, finance, nationality, career, health,
* Learn to use what you have and where you are to fulfill your calling.
* Read the Bible – to know the heart and mind of God.
* Pray to fulfill your destiny.
* Gratitude leads to praise and worship in prayer. Sing the songs of praise.

REPENT

* Stifles pride – demands humility.
* It is a constant practice – not a one-off.
* Opens the door to service.
* It searches the heart and the day.
* The unseen thoughts get purged.
* Do it 1,000,000 times – never give in.
* Too often we ignore the severity of God – Rom 11:22, Jer 9:24

SERVE

* Jesus sets the example by washing feet.
* It may not involve any skills – like washing feet.
* It uses your talents.
* Politeness, generosity, good manners are visible.
* Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done.
* It resets the purpose of chores. You no longer go to the shops for milk – you go to see if you can speak out for God – the milk is just an excuse.

PETITIONS

* Heb 12 – boldly approach the throne of grace.
* Thankfulness, repentance, a servant’s heart, tune our petitions to seek His will.
* Try kneeling in prayer. There is something about body + soul + spirit
* Isaiah to Malachi reveal the heart of God. In a relationship we MUST seek heart.
* Batterings lead to petitions, which lead to victory and wisdom. Worship recaptures the mind and heart.

**THANKS:** This morning we will look at 4 instances when Jesus thanks His Father. In all 4 instances we need to look behind the flesh, to see the heart of Jesus.

***1 Luke 10:21 21In that hour Jesus rejoiced in the Spirit and said, “I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and prudent and revealed them to babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Your sight.***

When Jesus sees that His disciples understand, He thanks God for hiding spiritual insight from the worldly wise and worldly prudent. There is a strong danger that Christians will feel that Bible study is the top priority for insight. It is very, very important, but it comes second. Study is a work, that facilitates insight, but it must never replace heart.

Believers can become excessively proud of their academic achievements. Pride blocks our walk with God. ***James* 4:6 “God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.”** Jesus thanks God for not rewarding pride. If God had rewarded pride, believers would never prioritize relationship. In a marriage, it is **relating from the heart**, that is vital. Both husband and wife have to be grateful, they must be willing to admit their faults, they must look for ways they can serve the other, and they must enjoy being built up by their spouse.

Jesus does not want these people distracting His disciples from their faith. He thanks God that He has hidden spiritual insight from them. Their pride had blocked them. If you want to teach your children wisdom, begin with heart – your heart. You have to live every moment in the presence of God. **Our example is the most powerful tool of our witness.**

In our witnessing we will come across people who are too proud and even angry about the gospel of repentance. Gratitude with humility is essential for growth.

The advice that Jesus gives is in ***Matt 7:6 6“Do not give what is holy to the dogs; nor cast your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you in pieces.*** When we pray for our prodigals, before we give pearls, we pray for the barriers to be smashed.

**2 A second example** of Jesus being thankful, was when he fed the multitude, *starting* with 5 loaves and 2 small fish. ***John 6:11 11And Jesus took the loaves, and when He had given thanks He distributed them to the disciples, and the disciples to those sitting down; and likewise of the fish, as much as they wanted.*** I would have been just like the disciples – absolutely hopeless! I would not have been grateful for the small start of God’s provision. I would not have been thankful. I would not have remembered that God can cause a huge gum tree to grow from a gumnut. I might well have exclaimed: ‘Is that all You’re giving me!’

But we must learn to look for the hand of God – in even the smallest answers to prayer. The brilliance of God, is that He can change what looks like a loss, to a victory. When you prepare to shut your eyes, look for the tiniest touch of God in your day – and thank Him.

3 A 3rd time Jesus thanks God is when He comes to His dead friend Lazarus. Jesus thanks God that His Father hears Him. ***John 11:41 And Jesus lifted up His eyes and said, “Father, I thank You that You have heard Me. 42And I know that You always hear Me, but because of the people who are standing by I said this, that they may believe that You sent Me.”***

This is a relationship that prays “Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done”. Have you ever kneeled in prayer? I seriously advise you to do it. I have had marvelous answers to prayer. There is something that kneeling does to the soul, and to the confidence that God hears you. I can honestly feel my heart humbled when I kneel before God.

Jesus thanks His Father that He has been heard. When you are battered by the enemy, and crying out to God, know that He hears you. Lazarus, the friend of Jesus had just died. This terrible news delivered by the sisters Mary and Martha, reduced the Son of God to weep, because He loved them. But Jesus sees behind the calamity, to bring out the glory of God.

When you thank God for some events of the day, look behind the batterings for the opportunity for God to work.

4 The 4th time we see Jesus giving thanks is at the last supper. This is an incredible example of obedience and submission to the will of God. He says in ***Luke 22:15 “With fervent desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; 16for I say to you, I will no longer eat of it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God.”***

***17Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, “Take this and divide it among yourselves; 18for I say to you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.”***

***19And He took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, “This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me.”***

***20Likewise He also took the cup after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in My blood, which is shed for you.***

The suffering that was about to come on Him did not stifle His gratitude. The Passover celebrated the amazing rescue of God’s people from slavery. It preempted the salvation that Jesus was about to bring to us. Despite what lay before Him, Jesus still thanked God.

So, gratitude is not just for the fun times of life. When you come to point 4 in your bed time prayer, be grateful that you were designed to contribute to the building of God’s kingdom, and ask God for someway you can fulfil your purpose tomorrow.

**COMMUNION**

Jesus knew that He was about to suffer greatly and be crucified. But He still gives thanks. He could easily have not surrendered His body. But He knew He had to conquer death. He had to die and rise again. Satan was given every chance to win – but death was conquered. Just the smallest of sins would have rendered our salvation void. But He conquered death on the cross.

So, when we take this bread, and remember Him, we too seek to break the flesh.

Bread

The blood is a symbol of life. We have participated in a new covenant, a new agreement, that declares that the penalty for our sins has been paid.

We have much to be thankful for. Amen

CUP

Closing Song:

**The Apple of Your Eye Psalm 17:8 Rob Merrells**

*There are days when Your praise is far from my heart,*

*I’m like a game with all points and no goals.*

*And I wander and squander my mind and my time,*

*And Your words are just missing my soul.*

*There are doubts all about my money and call*

*And I can be found in a place without You,*

*But it helps to remember I just have to cling to*

*My God – the Faithful and True.*

*So, keep me as the apple of Your eye Oh my God,*

*And hide me in the shadow of Your wings,*

*For I long to take refuge close to Your heart,*

*And sing for joy in the shadow of Your wings.*

*I am so grateful for the days when Your praise overflows,*

*We’re like the maid and the King once again,*

*And we romp with a freedom near the cleft of the rock*

*And Your words lift my hope from the pain.*

*The doubts of the day lose their colour and fall*

*But there’s one thing I’m determined to do*

*I’ve got to remember I just have to cling*

*To my God the Faithful and True.*

*So, keep me as the apple of Your eye Oh my God,*

*And hide me in the shadow of Your wings,*

*For I long to take refuge close to Your heart,*

*And sing for joy in the shadow of Your wings.*

**Statistics**

| **Country** | **Casualty range 2022** | **Type** | **Casualty range 2020-21** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| [Myanmar](https://worldpopulationreview.com/countries/myanmar-population) | 10,000+ | Civil War | 1,000 to 10,000 |
| [Russia](https://worldpopulationreview.com/countries/russia-population) | 10,000+ | Russo-Ukrainian War | 0 to 999 |
| [Ukraine](https://worldpopulationreview.com/countries/ukraine-population) | 10,000+ | Russo-Ukrainian War | 0 to 999 |
| [Afghanistan](https://worldpopulationreview.com/countries/afghanistan-population) | 1,000 to 10,000 | Civil War/Terrorist Insurgency | 10,000+ |
| [Burkina Faso](https://worldpopulationreview.com/countries/burkina-faso-population) | 1,000 to 10,000 | Terrorist Insurgency | 1,000 to 10,000 |
| [Colombia](https://worldpopulationreview.com/countries/colombia-population) | 1,000 to 10,000 | Civil War/Drug War | 1,000 to 10,000 |
| [DR Congo](https://worldpopulationreview.com/countries/dr-congo-population) | 1,000 to 10,000 | Terrorist Insurgency | 1,000 to 10,000 |
| [Ethiopia](https://worldpopulationreview.com/countries/ethiopia-population) | 1,000 to 10,000 | Civil War | 10,000+ |
| [Iraq](https://worldpopulationreview.com/countries/iraq-population) | 1,000 to 10,000 | Terrorist Insurgency/Political Unrest | 1,000 to 10,000 |
| [Mali](https://worldpopulationreview.com/countries/mali-population) | 1,000 to 10,000 | Civil War/Terrorist Insurgency | 1,000 to 10,000 |

<https://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/gsh/Booklet_5.pdf>

A total of 87,000 women were intentionally killed in 2017. More than half of them (58 per cent) 50,000 ̶ ̶ were killed by intimate partners or other family members, meaning that 137 women across the world are killed by a member of their own family every day. More than a third (30,000) of the women intentionally killed in 2017 were killed by their current or former intimate partner ̶ someone they would normally expect to trust.

<https://www.un.org/en/un75/new-era-conflict-and-violence>

Today, crime kills far more people than armed conflicts. In 2017, [**almost half a million**](https://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/gsh/Booklet1.pdf) people across the world were killed in homicides, far surpassing the 89,000 killed in active armed conflicts and the [**19,000 killed in terrorist attacks**](http://visionofhumanity.org/app/uploads/2018/12/Global-Terrorism-Index-2018.pdf).

In Australia today, wealth is shared just as unequally. The richest 10% of households hold almost half of all wealth (46%), while the majority of Australians (60%) possess only 17%. Almost 15% of Australians live below the poverty line after taking housing costs into account — that is 3.3 million people in poverty, more than 750,000 being children.

<https://povertyandinequality.acoss.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Poverty-in-Australia-2020_Part-1_Overview.pdf>

In 2017-18: • The poverty line (50% of median income, before deducting housing costs) for a single adult is $457 per week (pw). For a couple with two children, it is $960pw.

 • 3.24 million people (13.6% of the population or over one in eight) are estimated to be living below the poverty line, after taking account of their housing costs.

• 774,000 children under the age of 15 (17.7% of all children or over one in six) are living below the poverty line.

 • The average ‘poverty gap’ (the difference between the incomes of people in poverty in various types of families and the poverty line) is $282pw.

• Social security payments for single people without children are generally below the poverty line. The single rate of Youth Allowance (plus Rent Assistance and Energy Supplement) is $168pw below the poverty line, Newstart (plus these supplements) is $117pw below, while the single pension (plus Pension and Energy Supplements) is closer to the poverty line, but still $10pw below.

• Poverty in Australia is just above the OECD average level, placing us among a group of wealthy nations with above–average poverty. Trends (from 1999-00 to 2017-18): • The clearest trend to emerge from the data was a rise in poverty during the boom years (between 2003-08), after which it plateaued.

• The poverty rate rose from 11.5% of all people in 2003 to 14.4% in 2007, fell to 12.6% in 2009, then rose to 13.1% in 2017.5

• Child poverty was consistently higher than overall poverty but followed a similar pattern. It rose from 14.3% in 2003 to 18.1% in 2007. After declining to 16.4% in 2013-14, it rose to 16.9% in 2017

## Abortion in numbers

### Worldwide

* More than 1.5 BILLION babies have been aborted worldwide in the past 50 years.[i]
* An estimated 50 million abortions are carried out throughout the world every year.[ii]
* One in five pregnancies worldwide end in abortion.[iii]
* Approximately 90% of Down syndrome babies are aborted worldwide.[iv]
* 42% of all yearly deaths in the world are from abortion.[v]
* Every two seconds a baby is aborted - every time your heartbeats a baby dies. [vi]
* Baby girls are a particular target of abortion: at least 100 million girls have already been wiped out through gendercide - the deliberate targeting of baby girls for abortion.[vii]
* In 2011 the Wall Street Journal reported that 163 MILLION babies were aborted simply because they were girls. They called it "The war against girls." [viiib]