

## ***Looking and looking, but do you really see?***

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### **Gathering**

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*Create a space for worship - perhaps with a small table with a bible, cross and candle.*

*This week, it would be appropriate to find a **green cloth** or scarf to signify that we are in a time of "growing".*

*Start by lighting the candle. The candle helps to centre us.*

*Take some deep breaths as you gather your thoughts towards God.*

*A video of the prayers, readings and reflection can be found here:*

<https://vimeo.com/632623481/f94943aa7e>



### **Acknowledgement of Country**

The wattle trees are sprinkling the earth with perfumed gold dust.

The Waraburra (hardenbergia) is scrambling over banks and up the trunks of the spotted gum, it's purple flowers waving in the breeze.

We gather, together yet apart, and we acknowledge the land that gives us life and we acknowledge the Wodi Wodi people who have walked their stories and sung their songs in this place. Through countless generations they have cared for this land. We recognise their elders, past, present and emerging. May our words, prayers and actions cover this land to become flowers of understanding.

### **Call to Worship - Psalm 104**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A0CAZeUm3Sk&t=2s>

(Leslie Brandt)

### **Psalm 104**

<sup>1</sup> Bless the Lord, O my soul.

O Lord my God, you are very great.

You are clothed with honour and majesty,

<sup>2</sup> wrapped in light as with a garment.

You stretch out the heavens like a tent,

<sup>3</sup> you set the beams of your chambers on the waters,

you make the clouds your chariot,

you ride on the wings of the wind,

<sup>4</sup> you make the winds your messengers,

fire and flame your ministers.

<sup>5</sup> You set the earth on its foundations,  
so that it shall never be shaken.  
<sup>6</sup> You cover it with the deep as with a garment;  
the waters stood above the mountains.  
<sup>7</sup> At your rebuke they flee;  
at the sound of your thunder they take to flight.  
<sup>8</sup> They rose up to the mountains, ran down to the valleys  
to the place that you appointed for them.  
<sup>9</sup> You set a boundary that they may not pass,  
so that they might not again cover the earth.

<sup>24</sup> O Lord, how manifold are your works!  
In wisdom you have made them all;  
the earth is full of your creatures.  
<sup>25</sup> Yonder is the sea, great and wide,  
creeping things innumerable are there,  
living things both small and great.  
<sup>26</sup> There go the ships,  
and Leviathan that you formed to sport in it.

<sup>27</sup> These all look to you  
to give them their food in due season;  
<sup>28</sup> when you give to them, they gather it up;  
when you open your hand, they are filled with good things.  
<sup>29</sup> When you hide your face, they are dismayed;  
when you take away their breath, they die  
and return to their dust.  
<sup>30</sup> When you send forth your spirit, they are created;  
and you renew the face of the ground.

<sup>31</sup> May the glory of the Lord endure for ever;  
may the Lord rejoice in his works—  
<sup>32</sup> who looks on the earth and it trembles,  
who touches the mountains and they smoke.  
<sup>33</sup> I will sing to the Lord as long as I live;  
I will sing praise to my God while I have being.  
<sup>34</sup> May my meditation be pleasing to him,  
for I rejoice in the Lord.  
<sup>35</sup> Let sinners be consumed from the earth,  
and let the wicked be no more.  
Bless the Lord, O my soul.  
Praise the Lord!

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### Listening for God's Voice

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#### Reading: Job 38:1-4, 31-33

Then the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind:  
<sup>2</sup> 'Who is this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge?  
<sup>3</sup> Gird up your loins like a man,  
I will question you, and you shall declare to me.  
<sup>4</sup> 'Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth?  
Tell me, if you have understanding.  
<sup>5</sup> Who determined its measurements—surely you know!

Or who stretched the line upon it?  
6 On what were its bases sunk,  
or who laid its cornerstone  
7 when the morning stars sang together  
and all the heavenly beings shouted for joy?  
8 'Or who shut in the sea with doors  
when it burst out from the womb?—  
9 when I made the clouds its garment,  
and thick darkness its swaddling band,  
10 and prescribed bounds for it,  
and set bars and doors,  
11 and said, "Thus far shall you come, and no farther,  
and here shall your proud waves be stopped"?)  
12 'Have you commanded the morning since your days began,  
and caused the dawn to know its place,  
13 so that it might take hold of the skirts of the earth,  
and the wicked be shaken out of it?  
14 It is changed like clay under the seal,  
and it is dyed like a garment.  
31 'Can you bind the chains of the Pleiades,  
or loose the cords of Orion?  
32 Can you lead forth the Mazzaroth in their season,  
or can you guide the Bear with its children?  
33 Do you know the ordinances of the heavens?  
Can you establish their rule on the earth?

**Reading: Mark 10:35-45**

35 Then James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to him. "Teacher," they said, "we want you to do for us whatever we ask."

36 "What do you want me to do for you?" he asked.

37 They replied, "Let one of us sit at your right and the other at your left in your glory."

38 "You don't know what you are asking," Jesus said. "Can you drink the cup I drink or be baptised with the baptism I am baptised with?"

39 "We can," they answered.

Jesus said to them, "You will drink the cup I drink and be baptised with the baptism I am baptised with, <sup>40</sup> but to sit at my right or left is not for me to grant. These places belong to those for whom they have been prepared."

<sup>41</sup> When the ten heard about this, they became indignant with James and John. <sup>42</sup> Jesus called them together and said, "You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. <sup>43</sup> Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, <sup>44</sup> and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. <sup>45</sup> For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

Hear what God's Spirit is saying to the church.

***Thanks be to God!***

## Reflection - Looking and looking, but do you really see?

Over the last couple of weeks I've been struck by the different images of seeing in our readings. Most of you will probably remember the Sunday School chorus "O be careful little eyes what you see" (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1pG4v48drVo>).

O be careful little eyes what you see  
For the Father up above is looking down in love  
O be careful little eyes what you see.

O be careful little mouth what you say  
O be careful little hands what you do  
O be careful little feet where go

As I was thinking about what I was going to share with you today that kept running through my mind and I realised it's a bit like our readings – the image of the Father looking down in love has been turned into a scary kind of "God is watching you!" Like the disciples, like the rich young ruler, like Job, we sometimes need to be reminded of the love.

**As we look at these readings** there seems to be a theme running through them. We've been following part of Job's story as he has the mat pulled out from under and then has to cope with the loving wife and supportive friends - not! As if all that has happened is not enough these helpful fellows try to lay all the blame on Job as well. The conversation throws back and forth and today we come to chapter 38 where God has a few well-chosen words to say.

Where were you when the world was being formed, remind me how big the planets are or how far it is to the stars... God is not trying to put Job down, He's lifting Job's head to see more and further and greater things than he has ever seen before and in the process beginning to understand that our little, human view of things is just that, limited, less than the whole thing – if I was to show you one piece of a jigsaw puzzle, even if it had something on it that you could identify, it wouldn't tell you what the whole picture looked like.

When we look at the gospel reading there's something interesting about this chapter- each section has something to say about seeing- something beyond just looking - really seeing. The Pharisees come trying to trick Jesus as they ask questions about divorce. Jesus tries to help them see that God's perfect plan is for unity, love and care for one another and that it is our selfishness that gets in the way. Look beyond the question and think about the heart, the meaning, the reason why God has put these things in place.

A little further on and the disciples stop the children from coming to Jesus for blessing. His response is swift and clear – don't stop the children from coming to me. Again he tries to open their eyes; this what you need to be like; little children, open, loving, trusting.

Then last week we had another encounter- the rich young ruler coming to Jesus, unable to see beyond the list of commandments but still wanting something from Jesus. What did he expect Jesus to say? Was he expecting another list of instructions, harder perhaps than the first, or did he expect Jesus to pat him on the back and say what a good job he had done?

Mark tells us Jesus looks at him, loves him and speaks to him. What did Jesus see, someone trying so hard and yet so blind? Someone who doesn't really want to see any other answer? Someone who doesn't want to look in the mirror and see his own selfishness, pride, stubbornness?

Today we come to the next encounter. James and John have been working out their future positions – will you just do whatever we want? Can we have the best seats? It's funny, when I read these words it's so easy to be astounded at their temerity – to sit on the left and right of Jesus in the kingdom. Really? And yet, if I'm honest there are plenty of times where I just want Jesus to do, well, whatever I want!

James and John can't see beyond the power, the reward, being seen in the place of privilege, and again we find Jesus trying to help them see something more, a different perspective, another way. If you want to be great it's not about the finest seat it's about being the finest servant. Jesus has been living this out in front of them now he says it out loud – number one is found at the opposite end of the line to where you're looking.

What about us, you and I, here, today? The last eighteen months have reminded lots of people that they are not, in fact, masters of their own destiny and that the most important things are not things at all. Is there something Jesus is trying to open our eyes to? Perhaps it's to sit down and be amazed at the beauty of this incredible world around us – today I saw something amazing. While that storm was pounding Sydney with hail I was looking out over Surf Beach. The waves were breaking pristine, sparkling white onto the beach and as I looked it was as if a rainbow had been laid down across the ocean, the colours like a mist over the water and the horizon blushed with the orangey red. A few minutes later and the rainbow was hovering above the horizon, but just for a moment...

Perhaps we need to see those places in our lives where we need to be more childlike in our loving and trusting. Perhaps we need to see those times when the things we do have become like ticking off a list rather than gifts of love. Perhaps we need to stop and see the love in Jesus' face as He looks at us. Maybe we need to be reminded who it is we're following – the one at the end of the line, the one who lifts up the downtrodden, cares for the ones left behind and in despair. How's your vision? What do you see, and what is it that God wants to show you?

### **The God who serves**

Though you are God,  
with all the influence and status that the name implies,  
you refused to pull rank,  
and parade your power among us.  
Instead, you chose to step down into our experience,  
living among us, as one of us,  
with all the struggle and suffering  
that goes with being human.  
More than that, you adopted the role of slave,  
washing feet, serving people of no reputation or social standing,  
and giving of yourself completely.  
As incredible as it sounds,  
you are the God who serves,  
and we can respond in no other way  
than to give ourselves to you in praise. Amen.

*(Source: John van de Laar, Sacredise)*

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## Responding

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### **Song: Give me Your eyes, Brandon Heath**

This song probably isn't familiar, but throughout the generations as God has stirred in the hearts of people they have tried to express that longing to see, to see the world the way God does, to see people with that love, that care, that compassion that isn't interested in the best seat in the house. The Irish said "Bí Thusa 'mo Shúile", Be Thou my vision; Brandon Heath says it like this:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P5AkNqLuVgY>

Looked down from a broken sky,  
Traced out by the city lights:  
My world from a mile high.  
Best seat in the house tonight.  
Touched down on the cold black top...  
Hold on for the sudden stop.  
Breath in the familiar shock  
Of confusion, and chaos.  
All those people going somewhere...  
Why have I never cared?

*Chorus:*

*Give me Your eyes for just one second  
Give me Your eyes so I can see  
Everything that I keep missing  
Give me Your love for humanity  
Give me Your arms for the broken-hearted  
Ones that are far beyond my reach.  
Give me Your heart for the ones forgotten  
Give me Your eyes so I can see  
Yeah, Yeah*

Step out on a busy street...  
See a girl, and our eyes meet...  
Does her best to smile at me,  
To hide what's underneath.  
There's a man just to her right,  
Black suit and a bright red tie,  
Too ashamed to tell his wife  
He's out of work;  
He's buying time.  
All those people going somewhere...  
Why have I never cared?

*Chorus*

I've been there a million times...  
A couple of million eyes...  
Just moving, pass me by...  
I swear, I never thought that I was wrong!  
Well, I want a second glance,  
So give me a second chance  
To see the way You see the people all along!

## **Dedication of the gifts we bring, thanksgiving and intercession**

We thank You, God, for everything we delight in –  
sunlight in autumn days, colour in nature and art, rhythm in poetry and music;  
human achievement and family success;  
good humour; work well done; love and friendship  
and all your gifts to body and soul.

Most of all we delight in your salvation,  
the knowledge of your love, the assurance of eternal life,  
through Jesus Christ our Saviour.

We commend to you those who work in harsh conditions, and those who have no  
work; those whose lives are drab and grey;  
those whose poor health takes away delight in living;  
those who are lonely;  
those who have no home of their own.

Grant them the human help and comfort which they need,  
and the spiritual encouragement which will enable them to live with hope and  
courage, for the sake of Jesus Christ who leads us to salvation.

We pray for the elderly, asking for them clear faith and human support.

We pray for those in middle years, asking for them wisdom in their choices,  
and the recovery of a sense of wonder.

We pray for the young, asking for them good opportunities,  
and that their ambitions include the desire to serve.

May we all continue to seek the God of every age,  
made known in Jesus Christ, the greatest friend of all.

We bless you, God, space-maker, cloud-rider, earth-lover.

We bless you for the great company of saints who have gone before us and now  
delight in your presence.

With them we honour and praise your holy name,  
Father, Son and Holy Spirit, Amen.

*(Source: Rev Jock Stein, Church of Scotland)*

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## **Sending**

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### **Song: Be Thou My Vision**

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6CMclLT\\_Hjg](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6CMclLT_Hjg)

Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart  
Naught be all else to me, save that thou art  
Thou my best thought, by day or by night  
Waking or sleeping, thy presence my light

Be thou my wisdom, and thou my true word  
I ever with thee and thou with me, Lord  
Thou my great Father, and I thy true son  
Thou in me dwelling and I with thee one

Riches I heed not, nor vain, empty praise  
Thou mine inheritance, now and always  
Thou and thou only first in my heart  
High King of heaven, my treasure thou art

High King of heaven, my victory won  
May I reach heaven's joys, O bright heaven's sun  
Heart of my own heart, whatever befall  
Still be my vision, O ruler of all  
Heart of my own heart, whatever befall  
Still be my vision, O ruler of all

**Benediction:**

May the beauty of God be reflected in your eyes,  
May the peace of God reside within your heart,  
And may the love of God be the focus of you life, today and every day,  
Amen.

**The Paradoxes of Being a Servant-Leader**

Strong enough to be weak  
Successful enough to fail  
Busy enough to make time  
Wise enough to say "I don't know"  
Serious enough to laugh  
Rich enough to be poor  
Right enough to say "I'm wrong"  
Compassionate enough to discipline  
Mature enough to be childlike  
Important enough to be last  
Planned enough to be spontaneous  
Controlled enough to be flexible  
Free enough to endure captivity  
Knowledgeable enough to ask questions  
Loving enough to be angry  
Great enough to be anonymous  
Responsible enough to play  
Assured enough to be rejected  
Victorious enough to lose  
Industrious enough to relax  
Leading enough to serve.

*(Source: Brewer, as cited by Hansel, 1987: from a booklet, "Servant-Leadership Characteristics in Organisational Life" by Don De Graaf, Colin Tulley and Larry Neal)*

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