

Simple words that can be so hard

Pitt Street Uniting Church, Sunday 2 July 2023

A Reflection by Rev Dr Josephine Inkpin

Pentecost 5 A; Naidoc Week

Psalm 13; Matthew 10: 40-42

This worship service can be viewed on You Tube at <https://pittstreetuniting.org.au/spirit/reflections/>

Sorry, as Elton John sang, does often seem to be the hardest word, doesn't it? We know that personally. We know that as a nation and as a world. Other words can be hard too. Yes is one. Of course, No can also be hard. That is why there are so many moral injunctions. Whether we look at things personally, or corporately - say in terms of climate change - we human beings so often fail to say no to those things which do us and others harm.

Yes can certainly be hard though. Saying yes to God's life and grace can be hard, even when we know it sets us and others free. We are afraid: afraid to take the risk; afraid of the unknown; afraid of making a mistake; afraid of the consequences even when we know saying yes will be good for us and others. That is human nature. And human nature, and human will, alone, tends ultimately to fail us. Yet, by God's grace, these simple but so hard words are possible.

Our two Bible readings today, at the start of this NAIDOC Week, are similarly quite simple but often so hard. '*How Long?*' says our psalm: that cry of deep lament and longing that comes to us down the generations. Surely it is time now for justice and healing? The psalm is not only a justified complaint. It is a great prayer, leading into its own answer. God shares the lament and the longing and works to set God's people free.

Our second reading invites us all to share in these works of God's liberation. For justice and healing may often seem so hard, and so far away. Yet, in Jesus' words and in Jesus' spirit, it is happening right now and we are called to join in. This Spirit freedom is powerful stuff but it is also quite simple. For it begins with simple things, like sharing a cup of water with those who ask, or saying yes when we are asked to share life. Small practical acts of love cannot bring full liberation alone, in themselves, but they help justice flow and God's loving revolution roll. For as is also sung with liberating truth: '*from little things big things grow*'.

So let us continue to say sorry for what is wrong, no to that which denies love, and yes to new life, embodying it in our actions.

In Jesus' Name

Amen.