

Easter Talk

Big Idea: Do not ignore the need for blood this Easter.

I don't know about you but I hate needles. When I was a young fella the thought of getting a needle terrified me.

One time I went to the doctor – now remember I'm old now and things weren't as advanced as they are today – so I go to the doctor and he is going to give me a needle. I ask can't I take a tablet? No it has to be a needle! He sticks it in, I jump and he has to stick it in again!!! Dude. Now that I'm older I can handle the whole needle thing a bit better – I don't cry as much. I went to get a blood test and the nurse asked if I would like to lie down? Pffft, I'm a big strong guy, I'll just sit here. The needle went in, I didn't look but all of a sudden the world started going around and getting quite a bit smaller. The nurse looked at me with horror – probably thinking if this guy hits the floor I'll never be able to move him. She said you'd better lie down and I agreed in a very groggy manner.

So you can understand that I never pay much attention to letters from the blood bank.

However, I did get a letter from the Blood Bank a few years ago that really caught my attention, and this was the subject line...

“Don't ignore the need for blood this Easter.”

Blood is not a usual item on my Easter list.

- Food, chocolate, milk and bread for Good Friday because everything shuts,
- But blood doesn't generally feature on any of my lists.

Of course I understand what the Blood Bank are saying

- at this time of year when people travel there is unfortunately an increased need for blood.
- So in the hustle and bustle of the long weekend and
- while you're busy ticking off the items on your list ...
- **don't forget/ignore the need for blood.**

I want to pinch that sentence; **Don't ignore the need for blood this Easter**, because in our need for blood is the very message of Easter.

The Bible is a record of God's rescue plan for people.

- You see, as the maker and sustainer of all creation, God deserves our unreserved, undivided obedience and attention.
- But no one – not you, not me – no one responds to God in that way – we are all alike in that regard.
- Ask yourself now, just quietly, can you say that you let God call the shots in your life?
- If we are truthful the answer is no.
- It's been that way from the start – in the third chapter of the Bible we read that people started a mutiny against God and it has continued ever since.

But God who is a loving, gracious God has made a way open for people to be forgiven for their disobedience, forgiven for their mutiny; invited back into a perfect relationship with Him.

- But for that to happen our rebellion, our disobedience, our sin must be dealt with – it must be paid for.
- What is the price of sin? How can we pay for it?

People try many different ways:

- Trying to obey the 10 commandments
- Doing things to make up for sin – going without something that you like, giving money to the church, going on pilgrimages.
- Attending church on religious holidays
- Just trying to be a good person.

Most of the congregation here know that I enjoy coffee.

- *I have even been known to head down to a certain coffee shop a few times a week – I call it my City Office.*
- *I did have an account at my City Office.*
- *If I had a coffee of two it was marked down on my account.*
- *At regular intervals I pay some money and my account is cleared.*
- *I've had to stop that and pay as I go – it gets away on me too easily.*

While it works for coffee it will not work for sin – rebellion against God.

- If we try to pay our sin debt through doing things it will not work.
- That is not the payment that is required.
- “Wages of sin is death ...” **Rom 6:23**

Imagine if you can that instead of paying off my account at the coffee shop with cash I took a big can of “International Roast – instant coffee powder.”

- *Do you think that that would be an acceptable method of payment for a month's worth of espresso coffee?*
- *I think that payment would be demanded immediately and my account would be closed down and I would be asked to leave and never set foot in the coffee shop again.*
- *Instant coffee is garbage – it shouldn't even be allowed to be called coffee – should be called cafette or something...*
- *I cannot pay for espresso coffee with coffee powder,*

We cannot pay for our rebellion against God by what we do. It doesn't equate.

- The only acceptable method is **blood**. Do not ignore the need for blood this Easter.
- In the OT there were a number of sacrifices that needed to be made in response to sin.
- These sacrifices of sheep, goats and bulls were required to **remind** the people of their need to have their sin dealt with and to **remind** them that blood was required and the people's ongoing need for forgiveness.
- So people were destined to have to go through the messy, expensive exercise of sacrificing to alert them to their constant need of forgiveness and the constant debt of their sin.
- But this was only ever a pointer to a perfect plan that God had in store for his people.

When we get to the Gospels in the New Testament section of the Bible we read that

- Because God so loved the world he sent his one and only Son that who ever might believe in him would not perish but have eternal life. (John 3:16)
- **Jesus is the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.**
- Jesus, the one who will take on the sin of all his people and pay the price in their place.
- As we heard on Friday – Jesus, God's forever King who has come to earth to rescue God's people.

So as we read and remembered on Friday Jesus died on the cross.

- Through that death he paid the price of sin.
- No matter how bad you think you have been – Christ's sacrifice is sufficient to gain forgiveness

Jesus knew the need for blood.

- In our readings on Friday we saw a glimpse of the rejection, insults, beatings and torturous death that Jesus suffered.
- At anytime Jesus could have stepped down off that cross;
- At anytime Jesus could have called (12) legions of angels to come and destroy his enemies.
- But he did not.

There is quite a well known saying that tells us that *it was not the nails that held Jesus to the cross but our sin.*

- Jesus in a supreme act of love for those who were rejecting Him submitted to death on the cross in order to pay for our sin so that we could be forgiven.
- Even as he is being nailed to the cross Jesus prays to his father, **forgive them!**

The Bible tells us that without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness. (Heb 9:27)

- Jesus was prepared to shed his blood for us; to be the perfect, once and for all sacrifice.
- Don't ignore your need for Jesus' blood this Easter.
- There is no other way that you can be right with God.
- The wages of sin is death ... **BUT** the gift of God is eternal life (Rom 6:23)

Up until this week when I have needed a coffee I'd drop into my city office and get a coffee. Whether I have an account or not there is a time when that coffee needs to be paid for, in cash.

My parents however, have just opened a coffee shop in Ballina.

Now I get superb, espresso coffee for free.

If I want a coffee I ask and it is completely free.

I don't need an account, they won't take any money for it – it is absolutely free.

My Father foots the bill on my behalf.

When we come to God and ask that he accept us on the basis of Jesus our sin is paid for, and it is absolutely free.

- Our heavenly Father foots the bill on our behalf.
- Easter Sunday gives us a great confidence in this truth.
- When Jesus rose from the dead all his claims were vindicated, our sin paid for, death beaten.
- EASTER IS A TIME OF GREAT REJOICING BECAUSE OF WHAT CHRIST ACHIEVED FOR US.

But only if you call on him as Lord and Saviour of your life.

Jesus followers believe him, trust him, follow him.

Jesus' enemies reject his claims, but the Bible is clear those people will remain in their sin and have to pay that price for themselves.

Don't ignore the need for blood this Easter.

- Jesus offers right relationship with God.
- Jesus sacrifice, shedding of his blood sufficient for any sin no matter how bad you think you are.
- Jesus invites us all to benefit from his work on the cross.
- Don't turn your back on Him, don't turn your back on the need for forgiveness.
- Don't try to do it yourself

Don't ignore the need for blood this Easter.