

## Sermon 18 April 2021 Procrastination

### Exodus 8:1-15 Mark 3:1-6

The theme of today's service is Procrastination. However, I want to begin by talking about my vision for our new church and our fundraising. The topic of procrastination will become apparent a little later, though you might already hazard a guess as to the relevance of procrastination and fundraising.

Over the last year or so, I have often referred to the building of our new church, but not really in any detail. One lovely person did ask me last week if I thought about the building of our new church quite a lot. My answer to that would be, probably only once a day.... starts when I wake up and finishes when I go to sleep.

However, I make no apologies for regularly raising our awareness of this venture, because it is such an exciting project for our church, and indeed for the diocese. It has been a long time since a whole new church has been built from scratch.

I want to begin by touching on my vision for our church. By and large, what I have to say can be found on our website, but this is an opportunity for you to hear it in the flesh, so to speak. Besides, it is appropriate to include it in this presentation.

I believe that in today's climate, for any church to grow it has to be community focussed. We have to reach beyond boundaries of culture and creed. This is especially the case for our church here in Flat Bush. We live in a very diverse community and it is important to be relevant to that community. It is important to be present in the lives of all and sundry as they deal with the vagaries of life, as they look for meaning and a sense of comfort and security in their lives. In other words, we have to be a living part of our community.

Paul made the point on more than one occasion that Jesus is for everyone. *'There is no longer Jew or Gentile, slave or free, male or female. For you are all one in Christ.'* Galatians 3:28.

We need to meet the needs of our community. A principal Christian commandment is to 'love our neighbour.' In order to carry that out, we need to not only meet the spiritual needs of those around us but also to care for their material, physical and emotional needs. To that end, the plans for our new church include facilities which can be used for a wide range of programmes. I don't intend to list them now – check out the website.

I want the community to feel that this new facility is not just for 'those Anglicans,' but for absolutely everyone. Yes, we are proud of our identity as Anglicans, but I do believe that to be a true Christian in today's world, we have to embrace the diversity of our local community and beyond. I sincerely believe that is what Jesus Christ wants us to do and what he meant when he said, 'love your neighbour.'

I am choosing to talk about this right now because we have reached a critical point in our journey towards achieving our goal of a new church. We are very close to asking four nominated construction companies to offer their tenders. However, we are unable to commence construction until we have raised another \$2 million, though we do need another \$1 million on top of that to complete the project. These next few weeks are critical in terms of our fundraising endeavours, and following the Christmas/ New Year period when New Zealand effectively shuts down, and then another COVID 19 lockdown, we are ready to up the ante.

Very soon we will be approaching members of our church community to consider contributing to this extremely worthy cause, to be part of an exciting chapter in the life of our church. Actually, we all have an opportunity to make a difference right now. All you have to do is go on to our website, scroll down to Our Building Project, and it is all there. All the information you need, and even a donation form!

Now this is where Procrastination comes into play. No time like the present. Do it now while it is fresh in your mind. Tomorrow is one of the most dangerous words in the English language. The problem with tomorrow is that it never comes. Strike while the iron is hot.

In our Gospel reading Jesus heals a man on the Sabbath. Jesus wasn't concerned with rules and regulations that got in the way of what we really important – spreading a little love around. He wasn't going to wait until tomorrow. He acted there and then.

Then we have the Pharaoh who said to Moses, 'Tomorrow.' Oh dear, bad mistake. As we know, Moses and Aaron called down a variety of plagues on Egypt in an effort to persuade the Pharaoh to release the Egyptians. There were plagues of gnats, flies, locusts, boils, hail, darkness, and as we heard in our reading, frogs.

Just picture the scene. The frogs are out of control. The Nile is teeming with frogs. They are in the Pharaoh's palace, in his kitchen, bathroom, even in his bed! His wife and kids are probably standing on chairs, the floor alive with frogs, screaming at the top of their voices, 'Get these frogs out of here!' He goes to get a pizza out of the oven and what started out as ham and cheese is now frog and cheese, the emphasis definitely on frog. He can't back his chariot out of the garage without squashing a hundred frogs. What was he thinking? Tomorrow?!

Bottom line – people who get things done don't put things off until tomorrow. They don't procrastinate! So please come on board and join us. I accept that for many the dream, the vision is hard to grasp. But it is going to happen. If we all get on board together, we will make it happen.

Can I make one suggestion which might help in terms of getting your head around just what you might be able to give. Don't think of one lump sum, but rather smaller sums spread out over 3 to 5 years. You might surprise yourself as to what you can give. I know it made a huge

difference to me when I considered it that way. The donation form allows you to do just that. And of course, you get a third back each year from our kind government.

Remember this, *'For God loves the person who gives generously.'* 2 Corinthians 9:7. Or as Winston Churchill said, *'We make a living by what we get and a life by what we give.'*

Reverend Warner Wilder