



# PLAINS PRESBYTERIAN

23<sup>RD</sup> MAY 2021



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*Take seeds of his Spirit, let the fruit grow; tell people of Jesus - let his love grow.*

### James 1:2-4, NIV

*Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.*

### Seeing Obstacles as Opportunities

I suspect that many of us find it quite difficult to follow James' instruction to consider it pure joy when we face trials and difficulties in our lives. I certainly prefer the mountain top experiences of life to the deep valleys! However, it is through the difficulties that we develop perseverance and maturity. They also provide us with opportunities to see the faithfulness of our loving Heavenly Father at work in our lives.

I was speaking at one of our Communion services recently about how God can use obstacles and difficulties in our lives and turn them into opportunities for us to see His hand at work. However, when I mentioned obstacles becoming opportunities, I somehow managed to scramble the two words into one, and out of my mouth came a word (which of course is not a word at all): "obsta-tunity"! We all laughed at my mistake, but since then it has become quite a catchphrase for one or two of us as we have been challenged as to how we view difficulties.

When Joshua was leading the people of Israel into the Promised Land, having taken over from Moses, things were going quite well for them. They had crossed the River Jordan, the men had all been circumcised, and they had eaten the produce of the land for the first time after forty years of feeding on manna. However, they then found themselves facing an obstacle in their path in the form of the large, fortified city of Jericho.

The Lord appeared to Joshua and said to him, "See, I have delivered Jericho into your hands, along with its king and its fighting men" (Joshua 6:2). It always amuses me that the Lord said, "See" to Joshua, because in the natural there was nothing to see except a great fortified city. But God was wanting Joshua to see with his spiritual eyes, the eyes of faith.

Joshua had been assistant to Moses and would go into the tent of meeting when Moses would go to meet with God. In Exodus 33:11 we read that after meeting with God Moses would return to the camp, but Joshua did not leave the tent. He remained in the presence of the Lord. Perhaps this was the preparation He needed to enable him to see from God's perspective, to respond in faith regarding Jericho, and to follow God's unusual instructions.

What about us? Are we able to see with the eyes of faith when facing difficulties? Can we see obstacles in our lives and recognise them as opportunities for us to grow in faith and to see God's hand at work? Are there any 'obsta-tunities' in your life at the present time? If so, let us count them 'pure joy' and be expectant as to how God will bring us through.

- Jilly Lyon Taylor | [Seeds of the Kingdom](#)

### Gathering

It was late that Sunday evening, and the disciples were gathered together behind locked doors, because they were afraid of the Jews. We are afraid of the changes in our world – afraid of making decisions – afraid of standing alone – afraid of being different – afraid of criticism. Then Jesus came and stood among them. "Peace be with you", he said. The disciples were filled with joy at seeing the Lord. Then Jesus said to them again – "Peace be with you. As the Father sent me, so I send you". Then he breathed on them and said – "Receive the Holy Spirit"

-Life Plus



John 20:19

## Notices

**Staveley** | Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> May Staveley service at 10:00 with Paul Eden. Farewell and presentation for Arii and family at conclusion of service followed by morning tea. All welcome. NB Toilets available at the Staveley Hall.

### **St. Andrew's Rakaia**

#### Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> May

10:30 am | Rakaia Fit Kids | Welcome to all pre-school children. A time for friendships, fun & support.

1:00 pm | Steady As You Go | Balance, strengthening and gentle exercises for senior folk's health and well-being.. with Dianne Moss in attendance.

This Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> readings with Rev. Neville | Theme; Living the Christian Life; Readings - Matthew 6: 1-15; Matthew 6: 25-34

### **St. John's Methven**

#### Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> May

4:00 pm | Governance Meeting

#### Friday 28<sup>th</sup> May

St Johns Brick Club 3:15-5:00 pm on Fridays after school during the term 'Exploring God with Lego'. Contact Jayne 0274678105

\* Brick Club after School on Fridays is VERY BUSY!! Thank you Jayne. If anyone could offer some time to assist Jayne and her helpers, this would be appreciated.

#### Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> June

7:30 pm | Focus Group in the lounge

NO SERVICE at St. John's Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> May – Worship at Staveley. NO SERVICE at St John's Sunday 31<sup>st</sup> May – 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday Parish worship at Rakaia. Anyone requiring transport please phone Brian Blackwell

### Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> May | Day of Pentecost

Acts 2; 1 - 21 Gathered together in Jerusalem on the Jewish festival of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit comes upon the followers of Christ and propels them into the streets speaking the languages of the earth and astonishing the inhabitants of the city.

Proclaiming the Text. It can be difficult to communicate with people who are from different places or who speak different languages. But then, it can also be difficult to communicate with people who live across the street or with those who sit at your dinner table. But in this story, Luke indicates that communication with all people is possible when the Holy Spirit takes control. Language and geography are not barriers to the working of God's will. On Pentecost Sunday, we celebrate the old Jewish festival as the birthday of the Christian Church. In this Acts lesson, we have the story of the Holy Spirit's first activity among the apostles and an indication of the Spirit's capacity to reach beyond obstacles to bring people to faith. Peter stands and preaches the good news of Jesus, 3000 people come to believe that Jesus is the Christ and are added to the membership of the very first Christian congregation. Whatever their differences, and there were probably many { language and place of origin are indicated in the reading}, the Holy Spirit drew these disparate people together and made them one in faith. The gospel story is revealed to be a universal tale of redemption, one that communicates beyond human barriers. [Clayton J. Schmit]

## Contacts for the Parish

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### May Sunday Services

23 <sup>rd</sup>	9:30 am	St. Andrew's Rakaia	Rev. Neville Burns
	10:00 am	Staveley   Farewell & presentation to Rev. Arii	Pastor Paul Eden
30 <sup>th</sup>	10:30 am	Parish Worship Team; Café Service, commencing with morning tea at 10:15 am (Rakaia Supplying)	Trinity Sunday



Heavenly Father, thank You that You have promised to be with us always and to work in all things for our good. Help me to see obstacles and difficulties from Your perspective and to trust You at all times. In Jesus' name, Amen.

- Jilly Lyon Taylor | [Seeds of the Kingdom](#)