

**Sunday July 18, 2021**

## Service for Swansea & Charlestown Presbyterian Church

### Welcome & Prayer

It is good to come together to worship God. As the Psalmist said in Psalm 122 *"I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the LORD. <sup>2</sup>Our feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem. <sup>3</sup>Jerusalem is built as a city that is compact together: <sup>4</sup>Whither the tribes go up, the tribes of the LORD, unto the testimony of Israel, to give thanks unto the name of the LORD. <sup>5</sup>For there are set thrones of judgement, the thrones of the house of David. <sup>6</sup>Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love thee. <sup>7</sup>Peace be within thy walls, and prosperity within thy palaces. <sup>8</sup>For my brethren and companions' sakes, I will now say, Peace be within thee. <sup>9</sup>Because of the house of the LORD our God I will seek thy good."*

Let's pray. Lord we thank for the privilege of coming and worshipping you this morning. We often take for granted that we can meet together and we especially take for granted that we can meet with you. But you are an awesome God, great in power and in majesty and in might. And we are a weak and sinful people. And yet you have found a way where we can come into your presence, where we can be forgiven of our sin, where we can be clothed in righteousness, all due to your son, the Lord Jesus. So we praise you Father, Son and Holy Spirit and ask your blessing on our time together. Amen.

### Song – Blessed be your name

[Blessed Be Your Name \(worship video w/ lyrics\) - YouTube](#)

### Bible Reading – Ezekiel 2:1-10 (NIV)

*2 He said to me, "Son of man, stand up on your feet and I will speak to you." <sup>2</sup>As he spoke, the Spirit came into me and raised me to my feet, and I heard him speaking to me. <sup>3</sup>He said: "Son of man, I am sending you to the Israelites, to a rebellious nation that has rebelled against me; they and their ancestors have been in revolt against me to this very day. <sup>4</sup>The people to whom I am sending you are obstinate and stubborn. Say to them, 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says.' <sup>5</sup>And whether they listen or fail to listen—for they are a rebellious people—they will know that a prophet has been among them. <sup>6</sup>And you, son of man, do not be afraid of them or their words. Do not be afraid, though briars and thorns are all around you and you live among scorpions. Do not be afraid of what they say or be terrified by them, though they are a rebellious people. <sup>7</sup>You must speak my words to them, whether they listen or fail to listen, for they are rebellious.*

*<sup>8</sup>But you, son of man, listen to what I say to you. Do not rebel like that rebellious people; open your mouth and eat what I give you."<sup>9</sup>Then I looked, and I saw a hand stretched out to me. In it was a scroll, <sup>10</sup>which he unrolled before me. On both sides of it were written words of lament and mourning and woe.*

### Announcements

**Focus for July – Commitment.** How do we show our commitment to one another in the midst of a pandemic? Here are a few suggestions...

- Take time to pray through our phone book or Elevanto church regulars
- Make sure you find a way of serving our Church family each week ( be creative!)
- Notice who is not in Church and give them a call.
- Write a note of encouragement to someone who is quietly doing their job
- Volunteer for one of the rosters to take the pressure of someone else

**COVID changes.** The situation in regional NSW continues to be a fluid one but we are determined to keep one another safe during the current COVID spike. To this end we recommend that we all follow the NSW health advice. We will attempt to give you up to date current advice via email whenever it changes.

**QR Codes.** From this week QR Codes have become mandatory for all people who enter any of the Church buildings. This means that you either need to log onto the Service NSW website with your own phone OR you need to be added to someone else's phone. If neither of these options are available to you please give us your name and contact details and we will add them ourselves. This is a last resort & further stretches our volunteers and staff time. So please help us as much as you can. This is to help with contact tracing.

**Family of Origin.** Anna Moss, the Women's Ministry Co-ordinator will be presenting for us on family systems therapy on August 1 via ZOOM from 3-4:30pm. This time together will be a great way to see how our family of origin affects our thinking and our decision making. More details to come.

**School Holidays.** The normal activities of the church have again started up. Why not join in one of these (Kids Church IMPACT, SPARKLERS and Home Groups)?

**Church Picnic - Sunday 25 July.** We have unfortunately cancelled the Church picnic due to be held next Sunday. We hope to put it on later on in the term.

**Kids Spot.** For this term in Kids church, while parents are studying the book of Ezekiel, the kids are learning from the book of Revelation! Today we are looking at Revelation 1 and learning that we worship a living Lord Jesus who rules his church and rules the world. Question of the week: When Jesus died he looked weak, not strong. So why do we say that Jesus is the all-powerful King of Kings?

**Snow gums memory verse challenge for the week:** In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. Genesis 1:1

## Song – hear the call of the Kingdom

[Hear The Call Of The Kingdom {with lyrics} - //Keith & Kristyn Getty, Stuart Townend - YouTube](#)

## Prayer Points for 18<sup>th</sup> July 2021

**Psalms 107:** "Some became fools through their sinful ways, and because of their iniquities suffered affliction; they loathed any kind of food, and they drew near to the gates of death. Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble, and he delivered them from their destruction" (Ps 107:17-20).

**Pray for Canada.** Pray for revival that would stir Canadian people to give God honour in their land. Pray for immigrants to be drawn to Christ by the testimony of diverse communities worshipping. Pray for believers to humbly and lovingly represent Christ despite the pervasive stigma against Christians.

**Pray for Churches and pastors in NSW:** Pray for churches and pastors in NSW who have been hit with new and confusing rules about singing and meeting. Many pastors and staff at churches are tired from making all of the arrangements to meet regulations and following up those who are alone and struggling. Pray for patience and wisdom for our church leaders.

**Pray for Josh Montzka and Power to Change in Melbourne.** Pray God would encourage Josh as he faced some disappointments recently. Praise God for providing for Josh with his new place to live and the fact he can still participate in church in person. Pray God uses Josh's efforts to reach many people for Christ online.

**Pray for Australians to be humbled:** Psalm 107:39 says, "When they are diminished and brought low through oppression, evil, and sorrow, he pours contempt on princes and makes them wander in trackless wastes; but He raises up the needy out of affliction." Pray that we as Australians (including Christians!) would be humbled and realise our need for God. And God would have mercy on our land.

**A Prayer of Thanksgiving:** Let them give thanks to the LORD for his unfailing love and his wonderful deeds for humanity. Let them sacrifice thanks offerings and tell of His works with songs of joy (Ps 107:21-22). Lord may we remember your unfailing love and your wonderful deeds for humanity. May our sacrifices be the sacrifices of praise that tell of what you have done with joy. Amen.

## Family Matters – The Bible Project: Ezekiel 1-33 (up to 5:18)

[Overview: Ezekiel 1-33 - YouTube](#)

## Bible Reading – Ezekiel 3:1-15 (NIV)

<sup>3</sup> And he said to me, “Son of man, eat what is before you, eat this scroll; then go and speak to the people of Israel.” <sup>2</sup> So I opened my mouth, and he gave me the scroll to eat. <sup>3</sup> Then he said to me, “Son of man, eat this scroll I am giving you and fill your stomach with it.” So I ate it, and it tasted as sweet as honey in my mouth.

<sup>4</sup> He then said to me: “Son of man, go now to the people of Israel and speak my words to them. <sup>5</sup> You are not being sent to a people of obscure speech and strange language, but to the people of Israel— <sup>6</sup> not to many peoples of obscure speech and strange language, whose words you cannot understand. Surely if I had sent you to them, they would have listened to you. <sup>7</sup> But the people of Israel are not willing to listen to you because they are not willing to listen to me, for all the Israelites are hardened and obstinate. <sup>8</sup> But I will make you as unyielding and hardened as they are. <sup>9</sup> I will make your forehead like the hardest stone, harder than flint. Do not be afraid of them or terrified by them, though they are a rebellious people.” <sup>10</sup> And he said to me, “Son of man, listen carefully and take to heart all the words I speak to you. <sup>11</sup> Go now to your people in exile and speak to them. Say to them, ‘This is what the Sovereign LORD says,’ whether they listen or fail to listen.”

<sup>12</sup> Then the Spirit lifted me up, and I heard behind me a loud rumbling sound as the glory of the LORD rose from the place where it was standing. <sup>13</sup> It was the sound of the wings of the living creatures brushing against each other and the sound of the wheels beside them, a loud rumbling sound. <sup>14</sup> The Spirit then lifted me up & took me away & I went in bitterness and in the anger of my spirit, with the strong hand of the LORD on me. <sup>15</sup> I came to the exiles who lived at Tel Aviv near the Kebar River. And there, where they were living, I sat among them for seven days—deeply distressed.

## Sermon – A tough call! <https://youtu.be/DcEzmRsWldY> (Stephen T)

Just over 6 years ago you issued a call to me to come and be your minister. You asked me to leave the important task I was doing leading the Presbyterian Church at Tweed Heads to come and help you better be the people of God in this place. And around 100 of you attached your signature to it. And you did that because it was, your belief, that this was the will of God. That he calls people to do his work in his world.

Slide 2

But God doesn't just call ministers or missionaries to do the work of God. God calls all his sons and daughters. And our primary calling is to have a personal relationship with Christ. To live for Christ. To follow him in all that we do. And that leads to the next aspect of our calling, we are called to be holy. The apostle Peter puts it this way, “**15 but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behaviour; 16 because it is written, ‘You shall be holy, for I am holy.’**”

Each one of us are called to holiness. And we are called to make disciples. “<sup>19</sup> Therefore go & make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father & of the Son & of the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup> & teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.”

Slide 3

It was Martin Luther that expressed this calling the best. Luther wrote, “*The works of monks and priests, however holy and arduous they be, do not differ one whit in the sight of God from the works of the rustic labourer in the field or the woman going about her household tasks, but that all works are measured before God by faith alone.*” Do you get that? God has called some to be ministers and others mothers, some to serve God in schools, others homes, others on sporting fields, others at work. And we are to respond to that call by faith.

For most of us that calling is not easy. So, this morning we are going to look at Ezekiel's calling for this I believe will help us in our callings. Last week we saw that Ezekiel had seen this amazing vision of the glory of the Lord God Almighty. But God had not given him that vision to dazzle him but to instruct him. The aim

was not to enable Ezekiel to have the greatest quiet time of all time but to give him an assignment, a task, a calling that would be a tough one, a very tough calling. In fact, it was

Slide 4

### 1. No easy task (Ezekiel 2:1-7)

*2 “He said to me, “Son of man, stand up on your feet and I will speak to you.”<sup>2</sup> As he spoke, the Spirit came into me and raised me to my feet, and I heard him speaking to me.<sup>3</sup> He said: “Son of man, I am sending you to the Israelites, to a **rebellious** nation that has **rebelled** against me; they and their ancestors have been in **revolt** against me to this very day.<sup>4</sup> The people to whom I am sending you are **obstinate and stubborn**. Say to them, ‘This is what the Sovereign LORD says.’<sup>5</sup> And whether they listen or fail to listen—for they are a **rebellious** people—they will know that a prophet has been among them.”*

Ezekiel, you can't stay on the ground prostrate before the Lord forever. God has work for you to do. So, God picks him up and God speaks his word to him. And it is a tough call. He is to go a rebellious people. An obstinate, hard hearted people & hard headed people. A nation that had been given so much by God and has shown disloyalty by revolting against their Lord and Saviour. A nation that been given God's word time and time again through the ages and yet were again showing their defiance to that word. A nation that had heard the call of God on their lives but has responded with a deafness to all that God had said.

Slide 5

This was the task that God was calling the prophet Ezekiel to as his first assignment. That sort of a calling terrified Ezekiel, so God adds a but! I am calling you to no easy task but, but there is no need to fear. *6 “And you, son of man, **do not be afraid** of them or their words. **Do not be afraid**, though briars & thorns are all around you & you live among scorpions. **Do not be afraid** of what they say or be terrified by them, though they are a rebellious people.<sup>7</sup> You must speak my words to them, whether they listen or fail to listen, for they are rebellious.”*

Slide 6

God calls Ezekiel to be courageous. Yes, the natural response of any person would be to shrink back and ignore such a tough call on their life. Or maybe to water it down. Or to make it more palatable. But this is not Ezekiel's word but God's word. And so, Ezekiel's ministry will not be evaluated on the basis of his success in turning these people around but in his faithfulness in day in, day out, presenting these rebellious people with the word of God.

In the midst of an age of ungodliness the temptation will be for us to go quiet or to change the message. But Moses, Isaiah, Daniel & Paul and even Jesus realized that their calling was a tough one. And as our nation changes its values, its morals and its freedoms we are again finding out that our calling is a tough one also. When Jesus preached the word, many left him saying it was too hard. When Jesus finished his three years of ministry there was only about 70 followers. And if you and I are going to be his witnesses, if we are going to be salt and light to our nation, we will need to listen to these words that God has given to Ezekiel. Don't be afraid of what they say or be terrified by them just be faithful to your calling. But Ezekiel is not just called to no easy task but he has also in his kitbag

Slide 7

### 2. No easy message (Ezekiel 2:8-3:3)

*8 “But you, son of man, listen to what I say to you. Do not rebel like that rebellious people; open your mouth and eat what I give you.”<sup>9</sup> Then I looked, and I saw a hand stretched out to me. In it was a scroll,<sup>10</sup> which he unrolled before me. On both sides of it were written words of lament and mourning and woe. **3** And he said to me, “Son of man, eat what is before you, eat this scroll; then go and speak to the people of Israel.”*

It looked like Ezekiel still needed some more convincing. It seemed that Ezekiel was tempted to rebel like all his fellow countrymen. But now God says to him, I will give you the words, the exact words to say. And

here they are. They are written on a scroll, on both sides of the scroll. There is a lot to say & there is no room on the scroll for Ezekiel to make any additions!

Slide 8

But look at the subject matter. Look at the message that Ezekiel is called to deliver? Words of lament and mourning and woe. This is not a call to preach that *“God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life”*. This is a message that tells God’s people that they are rebellious, sinful and because of their outright defiance God’s judgement will come.

Wait a second, hasn’t God’s judgement already come. Five years ago, the Babylonians had broken the last vestiges of the Judah’s resistance. Destroyed the temple. Replaced the Davidic king. Removed the best & brightest out of the land & now here they are thousands of kilometres away starting again with absolutely nothing in the bank. You are saying that there is more to come? That before it gets better its going to get much, much worse?

Yeah, God that will draw a crowd. Thanks, God for the hospital pass. That is not the sort of calling I thought would be my destiny when I was raised in the home of an Israelite priest! And yet that is the message that Ezekiel has to eat and inwardly digest. That is the message that has to become a part of him, nourish him, energise him & empower him. Yes, when he opens up his mouth it will be Ezekiel who speaks but it will be God’s word that will come out

Slide 9

But. A not so easy message to swallow but a wonderful aftertaste is left in Ezekiel’s mouth. <sup>2</sup>*“So I opened my mouth, and he gave me the scroll to eat. <sup>3</sup>Then he said to me, “Son of man, eat this scroll I am giving you and fill your stomach with it.” So I ate it, and it tasted as sweet as honey in my mouth.”*

Have you ever been offered something to eat that looks terrible? And you cringe about even letting it go into your mouth? Sometimes when you are overseas and you are offered the delicacies of another nation you feel exactly like that. And some foreigners also feel that when they are offered vegemite! But it actually turns out to be a wonderful experience.

Well that was Ezekiel’s experience. Obeying God was sweetly satisfying. Following God was a pleasurable experience. And Jeremiah discovered the same truth. He said in Jeremiah 15:16 *“Your words became joy to me and the delight of my heart.”* Obeying the Lord, picking up the cross of Christ and following Jesus, even accepting the calling of God to do a difficult task and to proclaim a message of judgement and justice fills the Christian with joy, great joy. I am sure that you have found that to be so, as I have as well. I don’t always want to take the path that God calls me to go down but when I look back at the path I have had to travel, I am thankful for all the good things that God has brought out of such a rough road.

Slide 10

Gerald Sittser, is a US Professor who in a matter of seconds lost his wife, his daughter and his mum when a drunk driver swerved across the road and hit the car, they were travelling head on. Sittser said in his book, *A Grace Disguised “The accident itself bewilders me today as much as it did three years ago. Much good has come out of it, but all the good in the world will never make the accident itself good. It remains a horrible, tragic & evil event to me. Yet the grief I feel is sweet as well as bitter. I still have a sorrowful soul; yet I wake up each morning joyful, eager for what the new day will bring. Never have I felt as much pain as I have in the last three years; yet never have I experienced as much pleasure in simply being alive ... never have I felt so broken; yet never have I felt so whole . . . Never have I been so aware of my weaknesses & vulnerability; yet never have I been so content & felt so strong.”*

Slide 11

3. No easy task, no easy message & thirdly **no easy audience** (Ezekiel 3:4-11)

<sup>4</sup>*“He then said to me: “Son of man, go now to the people of Israel and speak my words to them. <sup>5</sup>You are not being sent to a people of obscure speech and strange language, but to the people of Israel— <sup>6</sup>not to*

*many peoples of obscure speech and strange language, whose words you cannot understand. Surely if I had sent you to them, they would have listened to you. <sup>7</sup> But the people of Israel are not willing to listen to you because they are not willing to listen to me, for all the Israelites are hardened and obstinate.”*

In some respects, Ezekiel's calling seems easier than say Jonah's calling. There is no need to travel. No language skills needed. No navigating a different set of cultural norms. Ezekiel is instead to stay at home & to preach to the people he already knew very well. But just as Jesus found out, a prophet is not honoured in his own town and amongst his own people. So Ezekiel is going to have to preach to a tough crowd. Who will not like either the message or the messenger. But it is not about you, Ezekiel, it is about me, says the Lord. They are not rejecting you but me. But that doesn't mean what you are going to do is a waste of time.

Slide 12

*<sup>8</sup> But I will make you as unyielding and hardened as they are. <sup>9</sup> I will make your forehead like the hardest stone, harder than flint. Do not be afraid of them or terrified by them, though they are a rebellious people.” <sup>10</sup> And he said to me, “Son of man, listen carefully and take to heart all the words I speak to you. <sup>11</sup> Go now to your people in exile and speak to them. Say to them, ‘This is what the Sovereign LORD says,’ whether they listen or fail to listen.”*

Slide 13

But. But I will strengthen you. Actually, that is what the name Ezekiel means in Hebrew. God strengthens. God will toughen Ezekiel up. God will intervene and harden Ezekiel's natural tendency to give in or to give up. They may have hard heads and yes you will end up butting heads with them but the Lord will make your head harder while at the same the Lord will make Ezekiel's heart even softer to the things of God.

Just think of those missionary stories where people are called overseas and they preach for decades before their first conversion. Just think of those parents that have witnessed and prayed for their kids for years and years and not seen any flicker of faith. Just think of those who struggle all their life with a mental illness, a physical disability, a family secret, a failure in the past, a difficult beginning to life.

Remember if that is your calling, God can strength you as well. God can make your head hard as he continues to make your heart soft. Right now, he might be saying to you and me *“Son and daughter of man, listen carefully and take to heart all the words I am speaking to you”* Yes Ezekiel seems weak because he is weak but God can toughen him up. If he is called to a no easy task accompanied by a no easy message and surrounded by a no easy audience then the Lord will give you all that you need to. Remember if God calls, he will also equip.

When you think about it, the Christian Church is growing in leaps and bounds in the two thirds world, the majority world but it is going backwards fast in our western world. Overseas the good news of Jesus is still often seen as liberating and life affirming but here in Australia it is old news, outdated, restricting, arrogant and lacking tolerance. And yet the vast majority of us are called to witness to the good news of Jesus here in Lake Macquarie.

Slide 14

1 Peter 3:15 says, *“Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness & respect.”* Always be prepared! In some ways it seems easier to go overseas and preach the gospel than to stay amongst our family, our neighbour and our workmates. But whether we are called to go or stay and whatever we are called to do and say God will strengthen us for the task. God will make this seemingly bitter task a joy. Friends, do not be afraid. If God calls, he always equips

Wait a second, at one time you and I were once a difficult audience. We were hardened by the things of God. We haven't always listened to and obeyed God's word. And yet God's word came into our lives and

changed everything. God's Spirit softened our hearts to receive the good news. God's grace was stronger than our sin and pride. And if it happened once with us, then God can surely make it happen again and again and again.

Slide 15

4. No easy task, no easy message, no easy audience and **lastly no joy (Ezekiel 3:12-27)**.

<sup>12</sup>"Then the Spirit lifted me up, and I heard behind me a loud rumbling sound as the glory of the LORD rose from the place where it was standing. <sup>13</sup>It was the sound of the wings of the living creatures brushing against each other and the sound of the wheels beside them, a loud rumbling sound. <sup>14</sup>The Spirit then lifted me up & took me away & I went in bitterness and in the anger of my spirit, with the strong hand of the LORD on me. <sup>15</sup>I came to the exiles who lived at Tel Aviv near the Kebar River. And there, where they were living, I sat among them for seven days—deeply distressed."

Slide 16

How did Ezekiel feel about his calling to be a prophet of doom? Bitter. Angry. Deeply distressed. Ezekiel is stunned and spends the next 7 days in shock, trying to process what has just happened to him. His life has been turned upside down. His hopes and dreams have suddenly been shattered. The sweetness of tasting the word of God has begun to turn sour.

This is not a calling he wants to have any part of. But it gets worse. He is called to be a watch man for his people. In Ezekiel's day a watchman would stand on the wall or in a tower to warn the people of a city of impending danger so that they could get ready to meet it or take steps to avoid it, arm themselves or flee to safety. What was required of them was that they should stay at their post, stay alert & sound the warning when danger threatened. So what God requires of Ezekiel & what He will hold him responsible for, is sounding the warning.

Slide 17

If the people respond or don't respond that is up to them, that is not Ezekiel's responsibility. Ezekiel is to make sure the warning is signalled. Using a modern day example, Ezekiel is the life saver who must sound the bell if there is a danger present for any of the swimmers. Ezekiel is the smoke alarm that needs to go off if there is any trace of smoke in the house. Ezekiel is the text message that will go to every mobile phone if a tsunami or a bush fire or a flood is on its way.

Whoever will listen will listen. Or in Jesus words "he who ears, let him hear." But as the scroll is now within Ezekiel's grasp, he is the one charged with telling anyone who will hear about the judgement of God, About the woe and the mourning that is coming onto anyone who will not repent & turn back to the Lord. And if that isn't bad enough it gets even worse!

Slide 18

<sup>24</sup>"Then the Spirit came into me and raised me to my feet. He spoke to me and said: "Go, shut yourself inside your house. <sup>25</sup>And you, son of man, they will tie with ropes; you will be bound so that you cannot go out among the people. <sup>26</sup>I will make your tongue stick to the roof of your mouth so that you will be silent and unable to rebuke them, for they are a rebellious people. <sup>27</sup>But when I speak to you, I will open your mouth and you shall say to them, 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says.' Whoever will listen let them listen, and whoever will refuse let them refuse; for they are a rebellious people."

Slide 19

At the very moment Ezekiel becomes the Lord's mouthpiece he is to be tied down to his house. Tied with ropes. And his tongue will be tied as well and stick to the roof of his mouth. His movements will be restricted. His mouth will be gagged and so the only time he will go anywhere and say anything will be when God releases him and that will only be for a time. For Ezekiel, life effectively stops and so he will only say what God wants him to say and do what God wants him to do. Nothing more. Nothing less.

Later on, in the book we find out that this stage of Ezekiel's life lasts for 7½ years. No wonder Ezekiel was deeply distressed. This is hard call. But in the midst of this God unleashes His Spirit onto Ezekiel. The Spirit

lifts him up and he again sees the glory of God. The spirit takes him back to the exiles. The spirit raises him to his feet and ensures he gets back home safely.

Slide 20

Ezekiel will not be alone. His calling will be powered by the Spirit of God. In the words of John Calvin, “*If any of us is fit for rendering obedience to God, the prophet certainly excelled in this disposition and yet the word of God had no efficacy in his case, **until the spirit gave him strength to rise upon his feet.***” You get it? Without the Spirit we can do nothing. With the Spirit we can do anything. Without the Spirit our calling is too hard. With the Spirit, under the very hand of God all things are possible.

Slide 21

So, what is God calling you to do? Some of us will be called to preach the gospel. Both in and out of season. A few overseas or elsewhere in the country but some here in Newcastle. Some of us are called to lead our family through difficult situations either on our own or with another. Some of us are called to work in difficult jobs, stressful jobs, that demand a lot of our time and effort and energy. Some of us are called to politics. Others are called to focus on the home and to raise children. Some of us are called to have major health problems. Some of us are called to live in poverty. Some of us will have a thorn in our flesh for years and years. Some of us are called to persevere with difficult marriages, with difficult children, with difficult parents. Some of us will be carrying a heavy cross most of our lives. All of us are called to come to Christ. All of us are called to be holy like God is holy. All of us called to witness to our family & friends. All of us are called to be salt and light.

Years ago, a railroad bridge washed away in the rain and a train went hurtling over the edge. Eventually, the man who had signalled a warning with his lantern was put on trial. The judge asked the man to demonstrate how he used his lantern. The lantern man showed how he swung it sideways & up and down, but all to no avail. Satisfied, the judge cleared him of any charges. Later the man said, “Whew. I thought they were going to ask if the lantern was lit.”

Slide 22

Friends is our lantern lit? Are we aware of the high calling that God has placed on your life, on all of our lives? If so, it means each one of us will need to put away the natural fear that we feel in responding to such a high calling. All of us will need God’s word deep inside of us. All of us will need God’s strengthening to do the task. And all of us will need to come under the influence of the Holy Spirit. It may be a tough call. But when God calls, he always equips.

## Song – Who is on the Lord’s side?

[Who is on the Lord's side \(BY St Michael's Singers\) \(gospel hymn\) - YouTube](#)

## Song – Servants of the Gospel

[Servants Of The Gospel {with lyrics} - //Bryson Smith, Philip Percival\\ - YouTube](#)

## Benediction

*3 And he said to me, “Son of man, eat what is before you, eat this scroll; then go and speak to the people of Israel.”<sup>2</sup> So I opened my mouth, and he gave me the scroll to eat.<sup>3</sup> Then he said to me, “Son of man, eat this scroll I am giving you & fill your stomach with it.” So I ate it & it tasted as sweet as honey in my mouth.*

## Morning Tea

There is no physical morning tea allowed at the moment but why not give some a call instead. Who might your ring now?