

GOOD NEWS SPREADS

Mark 1:21-28 [MW18-03]

Sermon preached by Rev Wayne Thornton at Mangawhai and Wellsford, Sunday 28 January 2018

In 1986, when I was a curate in the Parish of Taupo

- I attended my very first Synod, held in the Gisborne Boys' high School hall one of the most important orders of business was to convince the Synod to continue funding a Diocesan Youth Worker
- many of us believed it was vital to resource this ministry as our main way of sharing the Good News of life and love in Jesus Christ with young people who otherwise were not being connected with
- so the Youth Council members, there were no Diocesan Youth reps in those days walked around the hall doing this ...

[walk around with Good News Bible and a knife, miming spreading butter ...]

The Youth Council members asked us to tell them what they were doing

- can you work it out ...???
- no one in that Synod gathering could and they told us it was our “core business”
- at that stage I was the youngest priest in the Diocese and I had no idea what they were doing, not a clue
- the wise old heads who'd been there for years didn't get it the Bishop and Diocesan Secretary were at a loss
- my Vicar, who had a wide knowledge of theology, church history and tradition was none the wiser

What they were miming doing, and I am demonstrating

- is “spreading the Good News”!
- when they told us ... ah, of course, it's obvious and in one way I guess it is a parable of this whole “spread of Good News” thing
- obvious and hidden, straight forward and difficult, all at the same time!

So I would like to do something a bit different today

- something which involves all of you just where you are, or you might have to move just slightly so you are able to talk with one or two or more others
- and consider: what was the Good News about Jesus in our Gospel reading? I am sure you listened very carefully as it was being read but would you like me to read it again?

What was the Good News in this reading from Mark's gospel?

- please talk together for two minutes no panic, no stress, you're not not going to have to share any answers just work out for yourselves what you think the Good News about Jesus was
- all know what to do? great go, for two minutes
- and if it's two minutes of silence listening to the Holy Spirit that's ok too

Excellent. Now here's something else to consider:

- there were no newspapers, no radio or tv, no phones or internet
how do you think the Good News about Jesus spread?
- two minutes for that

Thanks for that

- which lays the the groundwork, the foundation
you can have a break while I share with you something
I came across that gives an insight into all this

In the mid 1800s a group of prospectors set out from Bannock in Montana in search of gold. They went through many hardships and some died en route. Finally they were overtaken by Indians who took their good horses and most of their supplies, and forced them to go back or they would be killed. Defeated, discouraged and downhearted the prospectors turned for Bannock. When they stopped to rest their limping ponies beside a creek, one of the men picked up a small rock from the creek bed. Upon cracking it with a hammer he said, "It looks as though there may be gold here." They panned for the rest of that day and the next and realised about five hundred dollars worth of gold. A small fortune in those days. They said to one another: "We've struck it!" They made their way back to Bannock and vowed not to breathe a word of what they had found. They secretively set about re-equipping themselves with supplies for another prospecting trip. But when they got ready to go back, three hundred men followed them. Who had told on them? No one! Their beaming faces betrayed the secret!

And the comment has been made: if we have been enamored with Him, whom having not seen we love, we should be unable to conceal the treasure: our beaming faces should betray the secret!

Now I'd like to invite you to work on something perhaps a bit more difficult

- and I will be inviting responses at the end
if anyone would like to share them
- to this question: what is the Good News about Jesus for us here today?
two minutes to consider with those around you

Any responses?

- I'll make a few notes

And a final question:

- how could we, can we, make sure this Good News spreads?
what can we do to spread this Good News?

Any responses?

Thank you

- I really appreciate your participation
may it help the Good News spread in our community

Of course it is important to be active and intentional

- in making sure the Good News spreads
- however, like with those prospectors, it can just spill over
- and show in our ordinary everyday life
- I'll leave you with this encouraging incident

One day as a woman was crossing a street at a London station, an old man stopped her. He said to her, "Excuse me, ma'am, but I want to thank you." The woman looked up and exclaimed, "Thank me?" He replied, "Yes'm. I used to be a ticket collector, and whenever you went by you always gave me a cheerful smile and a good morning. I knew that smile must come from inside somewhere. Then one morning I saw a little Bible in your hand. So I went and bought one, too, and I found Jesus."

Amen!