St Andrews Vision Series Bible Studies
1. JESUS BUILDS HIS CHURCH

Exciting reminders …

- Prayer & Praise *this* weds 28th 730-830pm at Church.
- Pls send a SG Photo and/or a short (5 sec) video to amelia.ross@standrews.net.au for thanksgiving dinner ASAP.
- Come to the Thanksgiving Dinner! (Nov 7th). Sign up by Fri 30th Oct. https://www.trybooking.com/au/event/1650161

For Starters

- How do you react to 'Vision' language?
- What do you think of our Church's 'Vision'? "Growing Disciples of Jesus Christ through Belonging, Maturity and Outreach."

Read Matthew 16:13-28

1. What did God the father reveal to Peter? (v17)

2. It is on 'this' rock, (the rock of Peter's declaration that Jesus is Lord), that he will build his church (i.e. the preaching of the gospel). But there is more to this gospel than Peter realises. Reflecting on Matthew 16:21-23 …

    - What does Peter get wrong? Why?

    - Why is both Jesus death and resurrection necessary for him to build the Church?

3. What confidence can we have that the Church will be built as we share the news of Jesus death, resurrection and rule? Where else might we be tempted to place our confidence to 'build' the church?

4. What is the relationship between Jesus building his church and our building project? What are helpful and unhelpful expectations to place on a building?

5. What is to characterise the people who are built into his Church community? What does the threefold call mean in Mt16:24?
    - Deny self
    - Pick up cross
    - Follow me

6. What is the difference between ‘respectfully appreciating’ and ‘following’ Jesus?

7. Christian service can be difficult and even disappointing at times. What encouragement does Jesus give us according to the following verses?

    - V17.
    - V18.
    - V18b.
    - V25-27.

8. What are the personal implications of being part of Jesus building project here at St Andrews? If St Andrews is to be a ‘Home for growing disciples’, how might you express commitment to it?

Sermon Summary: Jesus builds his church: through his death and resurrection, forming a family of disciples who follow him in the way of the cross

Pray together

St Andrews Vision Series Bible Studies
2. MATURITY

"Growing disciples of Jesus Christ through belonging, maturity, and outreach."

For Starters

- How is God's love different to a sentimental kind of love?

Read Ephesians 3:14-17a

14 For this reason I kneel before the Father, 15 from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name. 16 I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, 17 so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith.

1. Why do you think we need God's power to help us appreciate the fact that Christ, our King, dwells in us?

2. Why do we sometimes resist Jesus' rule, and how can we surrender more areas of our life to him? Give examples.

Read Ephesians 3:17b-29

And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, 18 may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, 19 and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

3. What does Paul mean when he says that Christ's love "Surpasses knowledge"?

4. What could help you to grow in your appreciation of Jesus great love?

5. Why and how do we go deeper TOGETHER into Christs love?

Read Ephesians 4:32-5:2

4:32 Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you. 5:1 Follow God's example, therefore, as dearly loved children 2 and walk in the way of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

6. Why is it important that our love for others flows from first knowing and receiving God's love, rather than simply trying harder to be good people?

7. How does imitating God's love in Christ help us to respond to people who irritate us?

8. What do you need to focus on more, marinating in his love or imitating his love?

Read Ephesians 3:20-21
20 Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, 21 to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.

9. How would you describe your current spiritual condition:
    a. Still exploring Christianity
    b. Slowly growing towards maturity
    c. Plateauing
    d. In decline
    e. Loving life and loving the Lord!
    f. Other?

- What factors might contribute to where you're at now?

- How can God's great love for you help you?

- How does v20-21 help you?

10. "We don't mature by simply doing more for him, but by going deeper into his transforming love". Discuss

Suggested Prayer: Ask God
- To give us the power of his Spirit to surrender more fully to Jesus loving rule
- To open our eyes to the immeasurable riches of Christ's love for us.
- To help us express that Christlike love towards each other

St Andrews Vision Series Bible Studies
3. BELONGING

"Growing disciples of Jesus Christ through belonging, maturity, and outreach."

For Starters

- Imagine someone arriving at St Andrew's for the first time. What would you hope they experience?
- How could you contribute to this experience?

Part A: BELONGING TO GOD

Read Hebrews 10:19-25

1. How would you describe the structure and flow of the logic in v19-25?

2. Are there times when you find it difficult to approach God? Why? According to Hebrews 10:19-22 what truths encourage us here? Where should and shouldn't we place our confidence?

Part B: BELONGING TO ONE ANOTHER

Read Hebrews 10:23-25

3. How/why does belonging to God mean we belong to one another?

4. Solo Simon says, "I don't need Church, I have a churchless faith, and as long as I read my bible and say my prayers all is fine." What would you say to Simon?

5. There are three 'Let us' exhortations in v22-24, indicating we do these together:
    a. v22. *Let us draw near to God*
    b. v23. *Let us hold unswervingly to the hope*
    c. v24. *Let us consider how we may spur one another on*

- So, how can we help each other draw near to God and hold unswervingly to the hope we have?

6. Verser 24 tells us to 'consider' how we can spur one another on to love and good deeds. This implies some forethought and intentionality. It is proactive rather than reactive. What is your experience of this and what might help you to move from being reactive to more proactive?

7. Think about a time when another Christian encouraged you in your faith. What difference did it make? Is there someone you could offer encouragement to?

8. Practically, what does it mean to do this *"all the more as you see the Day approaching"* v25?

Three aspects of belonging

In 2027 what would it look like for St Andrew's to be a faithful home for growing disciples through belonging? There are at least three aspects:

- Warm Welcoming
- Genuine Fellowship
- Generous Hospitality

9. What do each of these mean to you? Which of these three areas do you think is most important for helping people feel that they belong at church? Which might be most challenging for us/you?

10. What is one change, commitment or action you could make personally to help our church become a community where people draw near to God and genuinely encourage one another?

Pray together

St Andrews Vision Series Bible Studies
4. GIVING

For starters

- "Money is good but dangerous" Discuss.

Read 1 Timothy 6:6-10

1. How do you resonate with the picture of contentment in v6-8?
    - It's my current reality.
    - It's an aspiration.
    - Sounds impossible!
    - Other?

2. Why is it so easy to become dissatisfied with what we have? What tends to fuel our desire for more?

3. Do you believe what v9-10 says? Can you think of examples?

4. For private thought & confession (unless you are willing to share):
    - When has your own desire for wealth led to ungodly decisions or behaviour?

Affluenza: In their 2001 book by the same name, psychologists John de Graf, Thomas Naylor and David Wann define 'affluenza' as "*a painful, contagious, socially transmitted condition of overload, debt, anxiety, and waste resulting from the dogged pursuit of more*"

Read 1 Timothy 6:17-19

5. What are the two dangers in v17? Do you see evidence of them in your own life or those around you?

6. What antidote does Paul offer in v17b-18? What might these instructions look like in practice?

7. What long term benefits result from such an approach to wealth (v19)?

8. How can we enjoy God's good gifts (v17) while also stewarding our wealth generously and sacrificially in light of eternity (v18-19)?

Read 1 Chronicles 29:14-16

9. “We don’t own our wealth, rather, we steward what God owns and has lent to us” Do you agree? How might this truth change our attitude and practice when it comes to money?

A Suggested Prayer

Heavenly Father,

Thank you for the good gifts you generously give us.
Help us to enjoy them with grateful hearts, without living merely for our own comfort and temporary pleasures.
May we find our security and hope in you, rather than in uncertain riches.
Please teach us to be generous and willing to share, using our wealth to bless those in need, and support the advance of the gospel, so that many might hear of Jesus and be saved.
Help us to live with eternity in view, investing not simply in what is temporary, but in what lasts forever.

In Jesus' name,

Amen.

St Andrews Vision Series Bible Studies
5. OUTREACH

Growing disciples of Jesus Christ through belonging, maturity, and outreach

For Starters

- "Those without the gift of evangelism should stay clear of it". Thoughts?

Read Colossians 1:12-14

1. What has the father qualified us for and how?

2. What does being under the dominion of darkness communicate?

3. How would you explain 'darkness' and the need to be rescued to an interested non-Christian friend?

4. Do we see evidence in ourselves of the gap between the person we ought to be, and even want to be, and the person we often are?

5. One of the reasons we are to give *'joyful thanks to the Father'* is because of this rescue (v12). Are there ways you have become comfortable in your Christian life and perhaps lost sight of the wonder of what Jesus has done for you?

Getting Practical ...

The challenge from the sermon was to (1) Pray for 2 people, and (2) Invite 2 people.

6. Can you identify two people in your life you could start (or continue) praying for regularly? How would you build this prayer rhythm into your week?

7. What do you think would help you to invite one or both friends to a Christmas based Church event?
    - Carols at Church (Sat Dec 12)

- Lessons & Carols (Sun Dec 20)
- Xmas Eve (6pm family fun service)
- Xmas Eve (11pm)
- Xmas Day (9am).

A suggested prayer

- Heavenly Father, thank you that you have rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of your beloved Son. Thank you for the forgiveness and new life we have through Jesus. Help us to keep growing as his disciples and give us hearts that long for others to know him too. Please open the hearts of those we are praying for, and give us opportunities to love them, share our hope and invite them to discover Jesus. Amen.

Last week of Small Groups
PRAYER

Looking back
Give thanks for your Small Group over the year

Share something that has struck/encouraged you from each of the topics we've covered in our Vision series.

- Belonging
- Maturity
- Giving
- Outreach

Pray about these things together.

Looking forward

- Pray for outreach opportunities over Christmas and holidays
- Pray for a renewed committed to the Lord and his purposes through St Andrews in 2027.