

Series foundations

FOUNDATIONS for the FUTURE

A LIFE OF COMMITMENT

Commitment is **one of the most powerful ingredients** to a *healthy* and *productive life*.

Illn: Chris and I've got a friend who played for Australia in the **Women's Volleyball** team. At each level, commitment demands went up.

You can **have all the talent in the world** and **still not achieve** any measure of **success** in the things important to you.

What's the difference between a *great marriage* and a *tired one*?
(Kids!!) It's **commitment**.

You can be greatest
 husband/wife/father/mother.
You can achieve your potential with your
 studies/workplace/ministry
but it's **not going to just happen**,
 no matter how talented you are.

As **Rick Warren** says, "You become what you're committed to."

But the trouble is, we're **scared to make commitments**.

What if we *fail*?

What if we commit to the *wrong thing*?

What if it *costs more* than we can pay?

Why do we think we'll *succeed when others fail*?

So, many people **don't want to** make commitments.
People **live together** – settle for 2nd best. People **just check out Jesus**, never give their lives fully to him – settle for 2nd best. People **just attend great churches** like CCH, never own it for themselves and get fully involved – settle for 2nd best.
Look at life of a man - don't read too much of, but story is a great encouragement.

Nicodemus

Only mentioned in John's Gospel - three short passages.

The first time we read of him is in John 3.

Now there was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a member of the Jewish ruling council.

He came to Jesus at night and said, "Rabbi, we know you are a teacher who has come from God.

"For no one could perform the miraculous signs you are doing if God were not with him."

In reply Jesus declared, "I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again."

"How can a man be born when he is old?" Nicodemus asked. "Surely he cannot enter a second time into his mother's womb to be born!"

John 3:1-4

Nicodemus - a **man of standing** - respected, a Pharisee, one of "authorities", on Jewish Sanhedrin.

He was a man who made commitments - **achieved success** at work/in community. But Jesus worried him.

He **wanted to commit** to it,
but he found that he couldn't.

So he **snuck in** to see Jesus when no one was looking.

*"I don't get it! There's more, but I can't reach it. **How do I commit to something I don't understand?**"*

"I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again."
John 3:3

Experience New Life

When you discover Jesus, it's like getting a whole new shot at life.

2 Corinthians 5:17 "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, they are a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!"

You're **not compelled** to make the same mistakes over again.

Jesus said you can be born again.

That comes with a **new power to face today**,
a new power to **help you make and keep your commitments**.

Ephesians 3:20 "... according to his power that is at work within us..."

And it comes with a **new source of Perseverance and Patience**.

Galatians 5:22 "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience..."

Next Time meet Nicodemus halfway through the story.

Couple of years later. Nicodemus been checking him out, thinking a lot about what Jesus said to him earlier.

We come to an occasion – **John 7** – rulers/ Pharisees sent Temple Guards to arrest Jesus - **people starting to believe** Jesus God's great Saviour of our world.

Pick the story up in **7:45**...

Finally, the temple guard went back to the chief priests and Pharisees, who asked them, "Why didn't you bring him in?"

"No one ever spoke the way this man does," the guards declared.

"You mean he has deceived you also?" the Pharisees retorted. "Has any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed in him? No! But this mob that knows nothing of the law – there is a curse on them."

Nicodemus, who had gone to Jesus earlier and who was one of their own number, asked, "Does our law condemn a man without first hearing him to find out what he is doing?"

They replied, "Are you from Galilee, too? Look into it, and you will find that a prophet does not come out of Galilee."

John 7:45-52

Dare to Stand Out

Everyone admires the person who **achieves** in their life but **element of risk** when they started – dared to stand out.

It **takes courage** to make commitment, **particularly if** it's in areas that the world around us isn't in to.

Right now, as a church, facing *challenge* to do something *extraordinary* with *bringing the Gospel* to our *wider community*.

The whole **Foundations** for the Future project, with **purchase** of our **mid-week Ministry Centre**, is a *part of that strategy*.

But **our goal** is to own the facility outright within **3 years** - **personal goal** - own facility in **2 years**, and **commence a Property Fund**, **for the day** when it's time to **purpose-build** a *Worship Centre* that will facilitate our further expansion into our community.

But that takes commitment. In fact, for many people, it takes a **radical** commitment.

Let's be encouraged by Nicodemus. He'd **seen enough of Jesus** that he was prepared to **nail his colours** to the mast.

Psalm 27:1 "The Lord is my light and my salvation – whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life – of whom shall I be afraid?"

Faith takes hold of the future God sets before us.

Hebrews 12:1-2 "...let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross...

Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart."

People ask, "**Don't you feel awkward** presenting to the church the possibility of us owning it outright in such a short period of time? People make great commitments to it."

But I say, "**I would if it was me who was putting the dollar figure on people's gifts.**" But not about dollars, it's about us all **owning the church's vision** and getting behind it to the ability that we each individually have.

Equal sacrifice, not equal gifts. So long as Jesus inspires people to give - **safe**. He's not going to lead someone down the garden path. He knows exactly what he's calling individuals to.

I'd like to invite



The thing that changed everything for Nicodemus was **when he saw Jesus' commitment** towards.

Nicodemus would never be the same again.

Later, Joseph of Arimathea asked Pilate for the body of Jesus. Now Joseph was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly because he feared the Jews. With Pilate's permission, he came and took the body away. He was accompanied by Nicodemus, the man who earlier had visited Jesus at night.

Nicodemus brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about thirty-four kilograms. Taking Jesus' body, the two of them wrapped it, with the spices, in strips of linen. This was in accordance with Jewish burial customs."
John 19:38-40

Once you get it that Jesus died on the cross for you, **it changes everything.**

There's the **power to make real commitments that will last.**

There's the **wisdom to know what to commit to.**

There's the **source of making commitments that last the distance.**

Love Compels

What rules and discipline can't achieve, love can.

What fear can't achieve, love can.

What pride can't achieve, love can.

2 Corinthians 5:14 "For Christ's love compels us..."

Let's pray.

FOUNDATIONS for the FUTURE

A Life of Celebration

Jesus turns
water to wine
John 2:1-11

CELEBRATE!
we were built for it

"Weeping may remain for a night, but rejoicing comes in the morning."
Psalm 30:5

CELEBRATE!
God wants us to

"...while the morning stars sang together and all the angels shouted
for joy." Job 38:7

"In the same way, I tell you, there is rejoicing in the presence of the
angels of God over one person who repents."
Luke 15:10

"But the angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid, I bring you good news of
great joy that will be for all the people.' "
Luke 2:10

CELEBRATE!
be a person of faith

"Those who sow in tears will reap with songs of joy. The one who goes
out weeping, carrying seed to sow, will return with songs of joy,
carrying sheaves with him."
Psalm 126:5-6

We're coming to the climax of our **Foundations for the Future series**. It's been a great month so far, don't you reckon.

FOUNDATIONS for the FUTURE

There is **work** for Community Church to do. We have the **privilege & opportunity** to spread the **brilliant news** about Jesus to **thousands** of people around us.

Do you know that the **vast majority** of the **150,000** people who live within a **10-15 minute** radius of us have **no concept** of how exciting and fulfilling knowing Jesus is?

And **yet most of them** have had some sort of Christian influence in their life.

Somewhere along the way, though, people have been presented with **Religion instead of Jesus**.

And **my gut feel** is that the **average Aussie** doesn't want a **bar of Religion** – me included.

When you meet Jesus face to face, you quickly discover **how cheap religion is**, and **how poor a reflection** of Jesus it is.

If you don't know Jesus today, and you've come along to check us all out, this can be the first day of a new life for you.

Community Church, *who's gonna change the public perception if it's not us?*

That, I believe, is **the real challenge** the Lord is putting to Community Church. He's **inviting us to partner** with him in declaring what God's on about.

Today, we've taken up our Commitment Cards.

I want to **commend all of you** who have risen to embrace Jesus' challenge.

You might not realise it, but **you are boldly grabbing hold of the future** Jesus has for us.

Over the last few weeks, we've been looking at **ingredients for healthy and productive** lives.

Today we're going to look at a really important one, but one that's often overlooked...

A LIFE OF GRATITUDE

Illn: **Going to Nam's.** Eat whatever is put in front of you. Don't turn up your nose. Don't dry reach. And don't forget to say "Thankyou".

It's **too easy** to live life **without being thankful.**

The way *advertising* and **global communications** are these days, it's too easy to be **reminded of what you don't have,** rather than what you do have.

In the Bible, God tells us to be thankful – especially to him!!!

Psalm 118:1 "Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his love endures forever."

Imagine for a moment if God wasn't good!!

Illn: Renee Descartes "I think therefore I am."
And you thought that the **Matrix** had a new storyline!

Imagine if God loved us one day, and then couldn't be bothered the next.

I get too giddy looking at people on the earth as it spins around it's axis. I think I'll stop it for a while.

I wonder what that *woman* would do if she gave birth to a fish!! Perhaps a stingray! That'd be fun!!

Or what if he decided that we should have *snow storms* in the daytime and *tropical nights*?

I mean, just think about it. What if God decided to really screw us up? You think you could match him?

*"Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good;
His love endures forever."*

And that teaches us two things about thankfulness...

Be thankful...

in the good times

Psalm 107:21-22 "Let them give thanks to the Lord for his unfailing love and his wonderful deeds for people. Let them sacrifice thank offerings and tell of his works with songs of joy."

Being thankful in the good times

reminds us where our blessings came from in the first place.

We can't do life on our own.

We need God to **help** us.

Thankfully, he does just that.

Psalm 103:5 "The Lord satisfies your desires with good things so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's."

The main thing we have to watch in the good times is that we can be enjoying them so much that **we forget to be thankful.**

1 Timothy 5:17 goes on to say "... put our hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment."

We're supposed to enjoy!

But put our hope in God, not the things he's provided for our enjoyment.

Being thankful helps us get the **balance right!**

So, be thankful in the good times.

But it's **not always** the **good** times, is it?

The next thing to learn is to...

Be thankful...

in the hard times

Ephesians 5:20 "Always give thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Bad things happen to good people.

So, what? are we supposed to say, "*Thanks Lord! You've just destroyed my life. I needed that.*"

No, I don't think so.

God tells us to be thankful in the hard times for a **very important reason.**

It encourages us to believe for a resolution to the problem.

Philippians 4:6-7 "Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."

Thankfulness in the **hard times**

is a **fantastic way** to **remind ourselves** that **we're believing God** for a good outcome to the bad situation.

Jesus said, "Have faith in God. I tell you the truth, if anyone says to this mountain, 'Go, throw yourself into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart but believes that what he says will happen, it will be done for him.

Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours." Mark 11:22-24

When we need a miracle, Jesus says, "Trust me."

So we pray. **Learning to say** thanks up front, encourages you that **you're believing** for an answer.

"Believe that you have received it, and it will be yours."

Philippians 4:6-7 "Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."

Conclusion

So, what's happening in your life?

Good things? Thank the Lord!

Bad things? Confront it with your thankful disposition. Don't go under!!

What about us as a church?

Are there good things happening?

You bet there are.

We've been needing our own **facilities** for years. And now it's all happening.

Our **Sunday services** have been excellent.

Our **Youth** Ministry,

Children's Ministry

Women's Ministry

Small Groups

Outreach groups

Service Groups

Fellowship Groups

Training Groups.

God is doing brilliant things amongst us.

People are **discovering how exciting Jesus** really is and are **giving their lives** to him.

People are **experiencing miraculous answers** to prayer.

We need to give thanks for all that the Lord is doing with us.

We're in the good times, yes – **but we're not at the same time.**

While ever there is
one person in **our community**
who has **never had the opportunity**
to hear about Jesus in a **credible** and **powerful** way,
then **our mission** as a church is **not finished.**

There are **people all around** us,
most of them are **happy enough,**
but they **don't realise** what they're missing out on.

We need to pray.

And in doing that, we **need to believe** that God would **use us** to fulfil his desires.

But "whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours."

How audacious is that! We start thanking God for results before we even see them.

Thankfulness encourages us to believe for more.

Let's pray.

MISSION IMPOSSIBLE

I've written up a 19 page document – lessons learned.

As we start a new series, thought it would be good to reflect back on a couple of the key lessons we've learned together.

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED?

I'd like to talk on three things that are important, not only for where we're at as a church, but apply to all aspects of our life as well – home, work, uni, school, church.

IT TAKES A TEAM

Steering Committee/Athena Sheehan/whole church – 1st open inspection.

"Let's see how inventive we can be in encouraging love and helping out."
Hebrews 10:24

"In this way we are like the various parts of a human body. Each part gets its meaning from the body as a whole, not the other way around. The body we're talking about is Christ's body of chosen people. Each of us finds our meaning and function as apart of his body. But as a chopped-off finger or cut-off toe we wouldn't amount to much, would we?"

So since we find ourselves fashioned into all these excellently formed and marvellously functioning parts in Christ's body, let's just go ahead and be what we were made to be, without enviously or pridefully comparing ourselves with each other, or trying to be something we aren't."

Romans 12:4-6

UNITE AROUND PURPOSE

"The LORD said, 'If as one people... they do this, then nothing they plan to do will be impossible for them.' "

Genesis 11:6

"Do two walk together unless they have agreed to do so?"

Amos 3:3

"How good it is when brothers live together in unity. It is as if the dew of Hermon were falling on Mount Zion. For there the Lord bestows his blessing, even life for evermore."

Psalm 133:1, 3

BE DARING WITH VISION

"Jesus answered them, 'You give them something to eat.' " Mark 6:37

Painting "This is not a hammer"

"My food," said Jesus, "is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work. Do you not say, 'Four months more and then the harvest'? I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest. Even now the reaper draws his wages, even now he harvests the crop for eternal life, so that the sower and the reaper may be glad together." John 4:34-36



Impacting Communities for Christ