



## Bible Readings for October 25, 2020

Deuteronomy 34:1-12  
1 Thessalonians 2:1-8  
Matthew 22:34-46

### Reflection from Ray

**Jesus is again embroiled in controversy, being tested and challenged. That was not entirely surprising, it was the way rabbis taught, a vigorous clashing of minds, interpretations. Conflict is what produced most of the New Testament; the letters and gospels were written because there was a background of challenge, dispute, the need for clarification.**

**Jesus is here being asked to make his tradition and scripture live for him and his hearers. Handle it, use it, apply it, befriend it. He is being asked to go to the heart of the faith. Cut through all the trappings and embellishments. What is it about.**

**And Jesus does not shirk the issue but gives a direct and clear answer. He does not fudge and he does not give the rather generalised answer that may have been expected. "All commandments are from God and so all are to be treated equally –so answer is - all are equally important". Jesus answer is based on the part of the Hebrew scriptures known as the Shema, from the first word in the Hebrew text – Hear O Israel – Interesting to note the first thing Israel is commanded to do is hear – shut up long enough to listen! "Hear O Israel the Lord your God is one God".**

**And if you do hear and hear with your spiritual ears attuned what you will actually hear is something prior to the first and most important commandment to love God. Oh yes, although it is the first commandment it is not the first thing we say or hear. No the first thing is You are loved by God.**

It is late on Friday afternoon but has felt a bit weird all day. More like a Saturday. I guess that was because it was a public holiday in Melbourne. For another sporting event. We will get the holiday for the horse race next month but this one today was for a football game that has not even been played yet. And when it is played tomorrow night will be in another state's capital city hundreds and hundred of kilometres away. Oh well, we will take whatever we can get it these days.

But there is some good news. I was down at the church early today to take delivery of the sound and visual equipment that will be installed in the church next week. So there is finally some progress on that front.

And with the expected continuing easing of restrictions it looks as if we will be allowed outdoor gatherings of a number that could make it viable to hold an outdoor worship service. Church Council will need to discuss this option if and when it arises. I have to say though that a couple of informal kite flying conversations have not detected a great deal of enthusiasm for the out of doors option. Please let me know if you have an opinion on this.

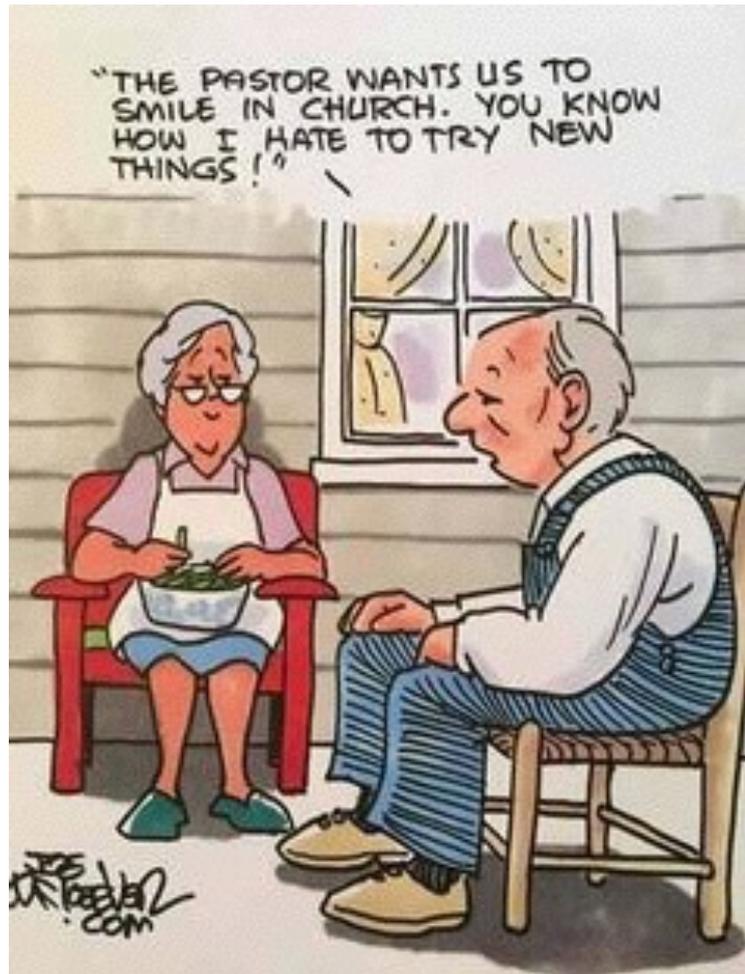
I did not receive any expressions of interest for the impending vacancy for the position of Editor of The Harvest. With my moving to Carlton at the end of this year we will need a new Editor. It takes me around 4 hours a week to put the news letter together but obviously the new person will put their own stamp upon the new sheet so it could look quite different. An open invitation for creativity and flair. It could be you! Contact Ray to discuss and get more information.





**Do  
Yourself  
A  
Favour**

This week's offering continues with a theme of Celtic folk/rock infused music. We have had a good selection of the Irish already. Mike Scott of The Waterboys is Scottish but the band has had a good selection of UK members over the years. And the song choice is "The Fisherman Blues". With their cross-pollination of literate, soulful rock & roll and folk traditions of the British Isles, the Waterboys have tread a multitude of musical paths since singer/songwriter Mike Scott formed the group in London in the early '80s. From the grandiose "Big Music" of their early classic, This Is the Sea, on through the rich Celtic-inspired folk-rock of their 1988 highlight, Fisherman's Blues, the mercurial Scotsman has made dramatic sea changes a regular occurrence, swapping lineups and chasing stylistic whims on an almost album-to-album basis. Across nearly four decades of work, Scott's sonic and spiritual explorations have been shared by literally dozens of bandmembers, though only fiddler Steve Wickham (and to some extent early mainstay Antony Thistlethwaite) has maintained his post as a Waterboy for a significant portion of the group's existence.



Thanks again to those people who have been able to keep up weekly offerings either through the pledge envelopes or by making a direct deposit to the church account. Details of Sunshine Uniting account are  
**BSB: 083430**  
**Account Number : 515591719.**  
 If you are able to keep offerings up it helps greatly to ensure we will be able to pick things up when we can meet in person.

**Do Yourself a Favour** continued from page 2

A native of Edinburgh, Scott first became involved in music as the creator of the fanzine Jungleland and later played in a series of local punk outfits. After college, where he studied English and philosophy, Scott and his band Another Pretty Face recorded some demos in London; following the group's breakup in 1981, he formed the Waterboys, so named after a line in the Lou Reed song "The Kids" but wholly appropriate given Scott's recurring lyrical fascination with sea imagery.

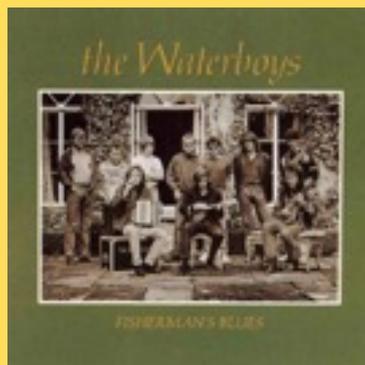
A newspaper advertisement calling for musicians led to a response from multi-instrumentalist Anthon Thistlethwaite, and along with drummer Kevin Wilkinson, the Waterboys issued their self-titled debut in 1983. A particularly cinematic mix of post-punk and new wave with a healthy dose of romanticism, Scott's approach during this period would later be described to as "The Big Music," after a single of the same name that appeared on their next album, *A Pagan Place*. Released in 1984 and aided by keyboardist Karl Wallinger and trumpeter Roddy Lorimer, the record expanded the group's rich, dramatic sound while further exploring Scott's interest in spirituality. With 1985's *This Is the Sea*, the Waterboys reached an early peak; a majestic, ambitious record, it earned the group a significant hit with the single "The Whole of the Moon." However, after the album's release, Wallinger departed to form World Party, leaving Scott to strike out in a new direction altogether, thus ending the band's "Big Music" phase.

Listen to the jaunty but longing below

[Fisherman Blues](#)

And if you enjoyed that Do clicking the bonus link for this

[the whole of the moon](#)



Fisherman Blues by clicking the link

Yourself an extra Big Favour by week

Every Sunday we cannot meet for worship is a Sunday closer to gathering for worship. (Trying to be positive here). In the meantime we continue to worship on line and here again is the link to the Synod site where you can find live streamed and recorded worship services.

<https://victas.uca.org.au/resources/covid-19-worship-resources/>

**Prayer for medical professionals, caregivers, and researchers.**

God, as more people get sick, healthcare workers and first responders are working longer hours with fewer supplies and with more risk of contracting the new coronavirus themselves. Renew their energy and sustain them on long shifts. Bring Your protection upon them as they work with patients. Multiply their supplies so they have the protective items needed to stay safe on the job.

Inspire and invigorate the research doctors developing better tests to diagnose the virus, create vaccines to prevent it, and identify protocols to eliminate the disease's spread. Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.

Having established that we are now ready to hear the first commandment. You are to love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul and might. What a beautiful thing. How exquisite that the first commandment is one to love the power that fires the universe, to fall in love with the Eternal. That that should be revealed as the secret towards which all people and all cultures reach. There are other times and places when we are implored, commanded, urged, beseeched to obey God, to worship God, to serve God, but here Jesus is quite unequivocal our first calling is to love God. Our relationship with the Creator of the universe is to be passionate one. It raises the distinct possibility that you can totally be convinced of the existence of God, but not love God. But as Jesus tells the story we are to learn to love God, and as we grow into that relationship it will complete the circle of love that has first found us. Any love we return to God is simply reflecting back what has first been put into our heart by God.

So Jesus has not invented something new; it is there in the scriptures; been there all along. Nothing new. The point being we do not need new teaching, we do not need to be told something we do not know. Love God. Just do it become it, let it soak into your bones and spirit and let that love take you into God.

There is a story that St John, when an old, blind and frail man used to be carried to the front of the church to deliver his sermon. There came a point when people began to be frustrated with him. About a month earlier he had delivered one of his shortest ever sermons, Love God,

that is all. Just love God, and if you manage that, love your neighbour. Ooohh, deep they muttered, and the next week the same message, Love the Lord your God. Oh, bit the same as what we heard last week a few were heard to mutter upon leaving the church. And the third week, a simple message of loves God, and your neighbour. By now a few of the leaders were appointed to have a word with the learned and revered apostle. Umm, a few of the brothers and sisters are starting to get a little restless that you are repeating yourself. Couldn't we have something new? And John, gestured for them to come close to him, to lift his head so he could whisper, "Why do you seek something new and different before you have completed the calling that is already before you?"

For many of us the first of the two commandments cited by Jesus is harder to understand. What does it mean to *love God* with heart, mind, soul, and strength? The second commandment, the one about loving neighbour as self, is not easy to obey, but its meaning is rather clear—especially when we read it in Luke's Gospel. There it is followed by the question "Who is my neighbour?" And we have the parable of the Good Samaritan to focus our thinking. *To love neighbour is to care for*

*woundedness wherever we find it and to reach beyond the narrow boundaries of the familiar and comfortable. Doing that is anything but easy, but understanding it is not all that difficult.*

We could do a lot worse that sit in silence for the rest of the day and just let that sentence swirl around your heart and spirit and

will and mind. Love God.... love God with all you are worth, with all you have. Have you yet learnt to love God?

Pat W 5:18 PM The Greatest Commandment

"...Love your neighbor as yourself"  
Mark 12:31a

