

A Glossary for St. Dunstan's

June 2, 2024 - Reprinted for Lent 2025

To help us remember and understand the foundations we are laying for our future together at St. Dunstan's, the following is a reminder of the themes we have touched on in sermons over the past seven months, particularly since the 1st Sunday of Lent. These have been designed to inform and encourage us about how loved we are by God, how special each one of us is and how God works to help us flourish and grow.

- Christ is our King - He is 'Supreme' and 'Sufficient'. We can trust that He can supply all we need as we follow Him and put His priorities first.
- The importance of the Holy Spirit. We need to learn to rely on the indwelling help, presence and power of the Holy Spirit. I used the illustrations of the bucket and sponge, the pint glass with squash and water blended, and the description of the way Jesus dwells within us given in the Greek word 'oikos'. This word has the sense of 'moving in'. Jesus 'moves in and lives with us'. We need therefore to learn to pray and listen to God who has 'moved into' our hearts. The lent course and the reflective sharing practice used at the start of some sermons are designed to help develop this listening.
- 'Repent and believe'. We laid a foundational understanding that 'metanoia' is not just an act of repentance or saying 'sorry' but the process of continually *thinking again* about who God is and what it means to follow Him.
- 'Right action leads onto right thinking'. This contrasts with the approach we often take in the Church, of 'right thinking leads onto right action'. There is a crucial bit of Church history that we will discuss in due course, when the Greek way of 'right thinking leads onto right action', began to dominate in the 4th century, replacing the hitherto Jewish/biblical way of understanding how we grow as disciples. This is more than just history - it has huge implications if we are to grow our church here in Cranbrook.
- We saw in Lent that, actually, it's our *values* that shape our behaviour and decision-making, not our beliefs. This requires good self-awareness, as we constantly live out 'metanoia' and seek to grow the church. Our values always need to be constantly brought back to God so that, over the course of our lives, what we value increasingly aligns with what God values.
- In the New Testament, Jesus gives us our purpose which then shapes how we do life together. I used this phrase in the sermon: "our Christology (Jesus) shapes our missiology (purpose) which shapes our ecclesiology (how we gather and work together as a church family)". We noted that it is easy to reverse this, to focus firstly on our activities and structures as a church, which then leads us into thinking about where and how people meet with Jesus in a much more constricted way than Jesus and the New Testament writers describe. This reversal in thinking can also be traced back to that same 4th century period I mentioned above.
- We saw in John 20:21 Jesus says: "As the Father sent me so I send you". It is important we hold onto this. Any Christian spirituality that does not enfold into it an understanding that we are the Lord's 'sent ones' will inevitably lead onto an inward-looking and diminished experience of the Christian life, compared to what the Lord desires for us.