

18<sup>th</sup> December 2017

What a brilliant morning we had yesterday. A big thank you to Em and the team that teach our little ones on a Sunday morning. I said to Em yesterday that she is very good at discipling "us" in being family. Watching the adults taking gifts to the children, then watching the children perform and take gifts to the adults that have helped this year was just wonderful.

What stood out to me most of all yesterday was the comments of one of the parents. Their children had just received some gifts, it impacted them, and they had a tear in their eye. Another parent asked them if they were ok. They said, *"I've never experienced love like this..."*

As I reflected on Sunday morning and their reaction to what is "normal" for me, I was struck afresh how easy it is to take what God has given to us for granted. I took this into my reading and praying this morning, asking the Father *"What should I read?"* I was lead to Hebrews 4&5 and these words.

*"We have much to say about this, but it is hard to make it clear to you because you no longer try to understand. In fact, though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God's word all over again. You need milk, not solid food! Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness. But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil. Hebrews 511:14"*

I had a few thoughts about this passage. The first was, how arresting to be told *"you no longer try to understand"*! There are many things that can prevent our understanding. Some are active choices by us, but many are insidiously passive. I think we get so used to the "milk" of what we think we know and the pattern of life that results in us no longer *"understanding"*. This lack of understanding leads to the bigger issue the Hebrew writer raises, the lack of acquaintance with *"Teaching about righteousness"*. This resulted in an immature, undernourished and underdeveloped Christian community, the result of which ended up with some abandoning eternal life.

God's incredible love for us means that He respects our choice and despite us sometimes wanting Him to wander in and just "do it" for us, he doesn't because He won't violate our will, even when that means we choose to say no to Him.

For some time, we've been focusing on "who we are" in Christ, that our old sin nature is gone and that because of Jesus' gift of righteousness we have "become" the righteousness of God. Being born again means that not only are we forgiven for our past, but we receive the gift of Jesus righteousness and the renewal of our "old" thinking and behaviour.

The Hebrew writer says that *"solid food"* is for those who have *chosen* to *"train themselves"* with righteousness. What does this mean? First, I think we need to recognise that we are all in training whether we recognise it or not. something is training us, we get to choose what that is. When you let "Righteousness" train you the first thing Righteousness will tell you is that your old nature and thinking are no longer who you are.

Jesus said *"A bad tree cannot bear good fruit neither can a good tree produce bad fruit..."* If I believe my identity as a sinner is gone and that my old, sinful and broken past no longer defines me then I will naturally produce the "fruit" of being able to *"distinguishing good from evil."*

I am praying that as a Family of believers we will live and eat from this truth, so that we can live true; overflowing His glory and goodness through everything we do.

Thanks for making our work a joy... so that we can declare to our community *"...joy to the world the saviour comes, let earth receive its King!"*

Blessings of our saviour to you,

Dave

**church by the bay**  
portarlington