

# Weekly Lift #21

1<sup>st</sup> September, 2020.

A little extra bible in your week



## Following the crowd

It's amazing how popular Jesus was before they crucified him. Miracle worker, healer of the blind, the lame and the sick, raising the dead, calming storms, feeding thousands. It's no wonder we have scenes like this in the gospels:

7Jesus withdrew with his disciples to the lake, and a large crowd from Galilee followed. 8When they heard about all he was doing, many people came to him from Judea, Jerusalem, Idumea, and the regions across the Jordan and around Tyre and Sidon. 9Because of the crowd he told his disciples to have a small boat ready for him, to keep the people from crowding him. 10For he had healed many, so that those with diseases were pushing forward to touch him. 11Whenever the impure spirits saw him, they fell down before him and cried out, "You are the Son of God." 12But he gave them strict orders not to tell others about him.

I imagine if we were there, seeing all that Jesus was doing, we'd want to be with that crowd that followed Jesus.

Today, there are so many crowds to follow. It's very easy to get caught up in the crowds that are going nowhere. The panic buying in our shops months ago was a great example of that. Sadly, we are often too easily led by others rather than being led by the Lord Jesus. So how do we renew our focus and follow him each day when the world encourages to go in so many other directions?

Above all, we must pray. Pray that we would be reminded that Jesus did not merely heal the sick and raise the dead, but that he died himself and rose again for our sins. This is why we follow him. Not because he offers mere physical healing, but because he offers the spiritual healing of forgiveness. We must pray and keep praying for this truth to be at the front of our minds.

The crowds turned on Jesus when he claimed to be God in the flesh. They turned on him when he claimed to be the one and only true way to God. They turned on him when they heard the truth.

The crowds will often turn on us too when we claim to be followers of Jesus, the Son of God. It's very easy to lose friends and even be rejected by our own family when we claim Jesus as Lord and King in our lives. But we do not follow him to be popular. We follow him because he is the truth, and the way and the life (John 14:6). Following Jesus is not the most popular thing to do, but it means we have a hope and a future that the "crowds" do not have.

At this time in our world, nothing can be more important than being reminded of *why* we follow Jesus. Not because he is a miracle worker. Not because he is a good person. But because he is the way to eternal life with God. So let's keep praying for one another, that we would keep following him when the crowds don't. Many of us are finding that these are difficult times to follow Jesus. So let's keep praying, especially for those who may find themselves distracted by the crowds.

### **Let's pray.**

God, our heavenly Father, remind us of the truth of the gospel – that Jesus came to die for our sins and offer us eternal life. We pray for our brothers and sisters throughout the world who are finding it more difficult to follow you at this time. We pray that you would remind us why we follow you and that you would help us to seek your direction each day. Amen.

### **Did you know...?**

Did you know that each week, our weekly lift is translated into Simplified and Traditional Chinese text, but is ALSO recorded in Mandarin and Cantonese?! It is uploaded each week to our website (Chinese website). What an encouragement to know so many of us are reading the same Scriptures together each week!

If you have Chinese speaking friends or family, please let them know they can find them here:

<http://sc.stphils.org.au/weeklyblog> (simplified – Mandarin)

<http://tc.stphils.org.au/weeklylift> (Traditional - Cantonese)

Nehemiah Bible Studies

Also, the new Bible study guide for the book of Nehemiah can be found here:

<http://stphils.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Nehemiah-Bible-Study-Guide-2020.pdf>

Some printed copies will also be available on Sunday.

God bless.

Bruce Stanley

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