

Prisoners wrestle with God's word



Chaplain Matt Warth helps prisoners meet Jesus through Bible study

At Roebourne Regional Prison, studying the Bible is helping men to turn their lives around, says Chaplain Matt Warth.

Sixteen men come regularly to a weekly Bible Study where they are working through *Just for Starters* – 7 basic studies. The opening study is on Rom 5:8-9... 'while we were still sinners Christ died for us'.

"This was very challenging for these men to accept. Though they believe they are at their worst, God deals with our guilt. No matter how far away you are from God, Jesus is still waiting for you!

"We take the study really slow and deliberate. It's a bit like an English comprehension class, to make sure they understand each word and the meaning.

"All of the men are reflecting personally, with much wrestling and digesting of God's word, which is a great encouragement.

"I heard from one prisoner who doesn't attend the group. He wanted to make a life change and so was watching others who appeared to him to have 'their stuff together'.

"He asked a prisoner who attends the Bible study, 'What makes you walk like you walk and talk like you talk?'

"To his surprise, the man returned with a Bible with verses highlighted throughout and said, 'This is what keeps me motivated every day'."

Matt was overwhelmed with joy and thankfulness to God.

"When I feel discouraged, I cry to God, 'Oh Lord you have to show me how you are working in people! But when I hear stories like this, I am reminded that God works in perfect ways.'"

Matt has been challenged by the importance of explaining complex Christian truths simply to people who know nothing about Christianity. He's found his own faith has strengthened as a result of delving deep into the scriptures.

His connection with individual prisoners doesn't end at the jail gate as he tries to keep in touch once each man is released. In prison, Matt's been a listening ear and this has built trust that he prays will continue to bear fruit for the gospel.

Thanks for prayer partners



Bathurst Prayer Group prays monthly for North West ministry

For more than 20 years, a faithful group of supporters has been meeting in Bathurst NSW to pray for ministry in the North West.

The group has seen many answers to prayer and marvels at how God's plans are always good.

They meet in the home of Margaret and Ken Webster, former CMS missionaries, who themselves experienced the blessing of prayer support during their service in Nepal.

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FAMILY and BEING, 'HOME'



The Parker family: (L-R) Joshua, Bishop Darrell, Andrew, Jonathan, Eleanor, Elizabeth

I grew up playing and watching Aussie Rules Footy. I played for the Mighty Holbrook Grass Hoppers up until I was 13 years of age.

Understandably, having a Grass Hopper as our mascot rarely struck fear into the hearts of our opponents – I often wished we could have been the Holbrook 'Tigers' or 'Taipans', but both of those mascots were taken. Perhaps that's part of the reason I adopted the Richmond Tigers as my AFL team (VFL in those days) at the tender age of 6. They were winning at the time and 'Tigers' of course are scary and dangerous. I'm now a committed for life 'Yellow and Black' junkie.

I love the fact that wherever I go in Australia, if I meet another Richmond supporter, we have an instant connection. We might not have a single other thing in common, but we are instantly friends – we share a 'Tiger' fellowship. My new friend might be an atheist, have body piercings on every available body protrusion, he or she might vote differently than I do, believe in radically different things, come from an entirely different part of the country, belong to a different culture and people, speak a different language, and they might even like Brussels sprouts – a green veggie I consider not worthy of being called a 'food'.

We could be the world's two most different people and yet, we are 'one' in the name of our chosen Footy Team.

How radically different it is when it comes to our fellowship together as Christians. When I meet a fellow follower of Jesus whom I've never met before, I already know so much more about them than I do my fellow Tigers Fan. Yes, we might still be very different, but our fellowship goes immediately so much deeper than any other fellowship this world knows. We have surrendered our life to the same Lord – the same Person rules both our lives. We trust the same Saviour to pick us up from sin and death and to pay the price for our rebellion against our common Father. We both look to serve Jesus, we pray to Jesus, we believe Jesus defeated death, and we are utterly convinced that Jesus will one day return and the whole world will be made subject to him. Our earthly circumstances might in fact be very very different, but we share deep life fundamentals that bind us together in ways that transcend time and place.

Many people have expressed much care and concern for Elizabeth and myself knowing we have left many close family and friends

on the other side of the country to come and live and serve in the North West. That is true, we have, and we value the concern shown to us enormously. And yes, we miss our loved ones 'back east'. Not a day goes past when we do not feel that distance. However, in another sense, and I say this most sincerely – we haven't really left 'home' at all. As we have met followers of Jesus here in the North West, though we might be quite different in some ways (way too many Eagles and Dockers supporters here!), we immediately share a profound bond that puts our differences in the shade. There are Christians here serving Jesus in deeply sacrificial and faithful ways, and we are profoundly thankful to God for bringing us here, even though the task ahead is difficult.

We've left home to come and serve among you – but 'home' is anywhere the Lord and his people are. It's good to be 'home'.

Darrell Parker
Bishop

Thanks for prayer partners

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Ken passed away recently but Convenor Margaret said the Bathurst Prayer Group meets monthly to bring thanks and petitions to the Lord. The 10 members are so committed that they have a large map of the Diocese on the lounge room wall.

"I write to each new worker in the Diocese to let them know about our commitment to pray and requesting a copy of any prayer newsletters so we can pray more intelligently for them and their area of ministry," said Margaret.



Please ask God to raise up more North West prayer partners.

You can't ask that!

The Geraldton Anglican Youth Group is helping equip teens to understand and follow God's plan for their lives, even if it's costly.

The youth have spent eight weeks tackling hard questions that are hot-button issues in the school yard, such as homosexuality, depression and pornography.

Assistant Minister Mike Welham said he and the youth leaders developed the program, titled 'You can't ask that!' to explore questions that are often swept under the rug because they were too awkward to talk about.

"A constant challenge for Christian teens is to consider how to approach big questions biblically and have the boldness to speak about them with their peers," Mike said.

"Young Christians are under so much pressure to conform to the world and reject God's good design for life and relationships. The aim of the series was firstly to demonstrate how to conduct meaningful conversations about difficult topics, and second, to give the teens a simple framework they could learn to use for themselves.



Geraldton teens Adelle, Luke and Joy feel more confident to answer difficult questions

"Is the Bible a lot of bullsh*t? Is God anti-gay? Shouldn't following Jesus be easy? Can a Christian be anxious or depressed? Questions like these prompted some really good discussions about God's plan for salvation and how we can respond. The key emphasis is that if Christians love Jesus, they will care more about what he has to say than the loud voices of the world around them.

Fifteen-year-old Joy found it helpful because it gave her more perspective about the range of hard questions people might ask.

"I'm less worried now about being asked such questions and feel a bit more confident in answering them."



Pray for NW teens to grow in their faith and confidence to speak about Jesus with friends

Good news for Broome



Visitors to Broome outreach events have started reading the Bible

Good News Week community outreach at Broome Anglican Church brought such good news that venues were bursting at the seams.

A team of 6 students from Trinity Theological College in Perth joined the church on mission which aimed to reach the Kimberley town with the gospel.

Assistant Minister Matt Morrison said the highlight was having the whole church engaged and praying – not just relying on the ministry team and the students.

"Church members were inviting people along, talking to new people and wanting to have conversations with their friends about the gospel.

"About 50 non Christian/non-church people attended the men's, women's and youth events, which culminated in outreach Sunday services.

"The Friday night Youth Group doubled in size and we almost didn't fit in the venue. Leaders thought we might get two or three visitors but we were overwhelmed with teens asking their friends."

One visitor who came with his mate had many questions for the speaker about why he believed in Jesus and trusted that the Bible was true.

After the men's event, five visitors took home a copy of the Gospel of John and one or two have started reading them.



Please pray for God to use Good News Week to grow his kingdom in the Kimberley.

Manila visit brings benefits



Steve is invited to visit seafarers onboard ship

Dampier Chaplain to seafarers Steve Combe says he is now better equipped to care for Filipino seafarers.

Steve was one of only two Australian chaplains chosen for AHOY Immersion training in the capital city, Manila. The five day training, which included presentations and excursions, was significant because Filipino seafarers make up the single biggest nationality group in worldwide shipping.

Steve has already had doors open as a result of on-the-ground experience of the social and cultural background of Filipinos and a greater knowledge of the Filipino maritime sector.

"It has been really special to be able to say to Filipino seafarers when I see them on board a ship that just weeks ago I was in their capital city.

"I can see their eyes light up when I tell them that I spent a week in Manila experiencing things that affect them directly.

"The benefit of this for me is being able to relate deeper to seafarers who I talk with when I board their ships."

Steve says it was important to learn what things are like for seafarers in their work, family or home environments, such as the busyness of the streets, the people flooding shops and roadways and the traffic congestion that adds much time to travel very short distances.

He is asking God to use this newfound understand to improve his care of and outreach to seafarers.



"It has been really special to be able to say to Filipino seafarers when I see them on board a ship that just weeks ago I was in their capital city. "

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Volunteers needed

We urgently need ministry-minded people to help care for seafarers

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Shop assistants

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Port Hedland:

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Dampier:

Steve 0402 402 610

Geraldton:

Peter 0407 865 025

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