

BISHOP JOHN'S PENTECOST MESSAGE 2012

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS WITH NOTES FOR LEADERS

Read **Galatians 5:16-26** and **1 John 4:7-16**

- Consider how Paul describes the “fruit of the Holy Spirit” in Galatians 5. How does this differ from other images used to describe the Holy Spirit and the Spirit's work?

Images associated with the Spirit include fire, wind, power, and gifts. Matthew 7:15-20 gives some insight into the image of fruit. Fruit speaks of inward identity, true nature. Where the fruit can be seen this evidence of the nature-changing work of the Holy Spirit.

- How does Paul describe the nature of our contribution to the this fruit being produced?

Consider verses 24-26. Here there are references such as “crucified the flesh”, “keep in step with the spirit” and “do not become conceited”, etc. What do these look like in everyday life?

- In verse 13 of chapter 4 of his letter, John speaks of the Holy Spirit being the grounds of assurance that “we live in him and he in us.” How does this assurance help us as we live and relate to each other as God's people?

For John the presence of the Holy Spirit points to how we abide in Christ which he describes over and over again in terms of “love.” We love because Christ loved. A demonstration of God allows people to see the reality of God in the real world. In this way the love of God's people proclaims the reality of God and the nature of the Gospel (crf. John 3:16). The Spirit still puts that same gospel to work in us, in our church, in our community, today.

Bishop John describes his experience of the work of the Holy Spirit in Tasmania in terms of God using us to produce **LIFE, LIGHT** and **LOVE**.

"LIFE" points to the blessings of God in family, work, the environment, and our hope and joy in Christ.

- Share your experience of how God has brought LIFE to you.
- What are some Bible passages that help us to understand this experience?

Possible Examples: John 10:10, John 14:6, Revelation 22:1-4, 1 Corinthians 15:50-56, Psalm 23

- How might you personally, and as a group, seek to bring life to the wider community and those you know?

"LIGHT" points to the proclamation of God's truth against evil, and injustice and asserts mercy, wisdom and the grace of the gospel.

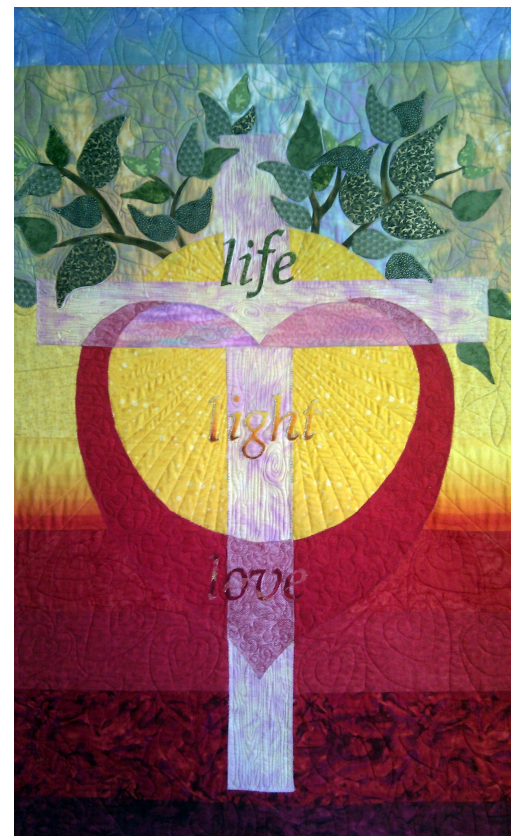
- Where, in our society does light need to shine? What biblical truths need to be proclaimed and received?

Consider passages such as: Romans 10:14-15, Micah 6:8, Luke 4:18-19, James 1:19-27

- How, specifically, might you, your group, or your church shine a light in your community?

"LOVE" points to the love of God that *overcomes* sin and brokenness. This is the love of forgiveness, reconciliation and welcome for the stranger and is the substance of grace-filled lives.

- Share a passage or story from the Bible that best describes your experience of God's love towards you.



Possible passages: John 3:16, Colossians 1:15-23, Romans 8, Jeremiah 31:1-6, etc.

- Pray for someone who you know needs to experience the love of God in some way. Pray for each other also.

Bishop John's Prayer of Blessing for Tasmania

Bless in abundance the lives of the people of Tasmania.
Enrich our society with relationships that deepen our common life.
Grant seasonal weather to our State,
And enable us, by your grace, to create life-enriching work for our unemployed.
God of all Life, bless Tasmania.

God of all Light,
Bless this State with leadership that is honest and caring.
Send the light of your wisdom on our work and our play.
Shine the light of your justice on all our dealings,
So that these islands may reflect your light in all the world.
God of all Light, bless Tasmania.

God of all Love,
Bless Tasmania with your love, in all we say and do.
Help us to love one another, as neighbours and friends.
Care for families whose young have left these shores.
And by your good Spirit, ignite our love for Christ.
God of all Love, bless Tasmania.

In the Name of God: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.
AMEN.