

Luke 10:21-24 “A whale of a time”

Today, I am reflecting on the LWQ convention theme that we used up at Hervey Bay. Our theme was “A whale of a time”. We shared in readings of rejoicing, and from the gospel of Luke 10:21-24 we read...

Luke 10:21-24 *Jesus Rejoices*

²¹ At that same time Jesus was filled with the joy of the Holy Spirit, and he said, “O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, thank you for hiding these things from those who think themselves wise and clever, and for revealing them to the childlike. Yes, Father, it pleased you to do it this way.

²² “My Father has entrusted everything to me. No one truly knows the Son except the Father, and no one truly knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.”

²³ Then when they were alone, he turned to the disciples and said, “Blessed are the eyes that see what you have seen. ²⁴ I tell you, many prophets and kings longed to see what you see, but they didn’t see it. And they longed to hear what you hear, but they didn’t hear it.”

The whale-watching season is just starting along the coast – and it goes through to November. It was perfect timing for our Lutheran Women of Queensland to come together & have ‘a whale of a time’ - which was of course our convention theme.

So, who here has done whale watching before? If you haven’t been out whale-watching before, you have no-doubt seen it all on TV.

I would absolutely love to see Migaloo, the albino humpback whale. Of course, we all saw Migaloo floating around at the Commonwealth Games this year – looking multi-coloured most of the time, rather than white.

The real Migaloo, of course, is the world's only known albino ‘humpback’. ‘Migaloo’ is actually an indigenous term that means ‘white-fella’. That humpback whale is a ‘white-fella’. And Migaloo has been seen nearly every year since he was first spotted in 1991. Most people don’t get to see Migaloo, yet, he is a household name, and even has his own website and Twitter account – God bless him.

So, the convention theme at Hervey Bay was to have a whale of a time. What a happy theme it was – ‘A whale of a time’.

What is it about whales, that we associate with happiness?

The jumping, the splashing, the frolicking – everything about a whale's happiness is on a large scale. Even their mouth looks like an enormous smile. One of their enormous eyes looks so happy to see people watching them from a tourist boat.

And we are happy to watch them enjoy their freedom – as they go wherever they please. Watching a whale having 'a whale of a time' is clearly a rewarding experience.

Jesus had a rewarding experience as the 72 missionaries came back & reported how things went for them. In Luke 10, Jesus sent them out in pairs to the towns where Jesus was heading. They went ahead of Jesus healing people & proclaiming the kingdom of God. Hearts were being prepared for the arrival of Jesus.

And the missionaries had a whale of a time! People were healed. The kingdom of God was proclaimed. Even the demons submitted to the missionaries - in the name of Christ. And they reported all this back to Jesus.

And Jesus was full of joy through the Holy Spirit.

Jesus was having a whale of a time - listening to the 72.

Jesus had a whale of a time watching Satan fall like lightning from heaven.

And Jesus was happy. Jesus was rejoicing, because God the Father was letting people receive the kingdom of heaven in a simple, childlike way. There was nothing fancy about it – people's names were being written in heaven by the grace of God. The missionaries' names were written in heaven by the grace of God. The workers of the gospel were doing their gospel work; the Good News was reaping a harvest of salvation. And eternal salvation was the best reason to rejoice. What words of encouragement, "Rejoice ... because your names are written in heaven."

What stands out to me here, is that Jesus was rejoicing for the sake of others. As Jesus watched God's love coming to others - he rejoiced.

One of the many good things about coming to Holy Communion, is watching all your brothers & sisters come & go. We all do it, we watch people come forward to communion. And we watch with care & interest in each other. Whether you come to communion happy or sad, there's a unique reverence during communion, where we have 'a whale of a time' watching people enjoy the salvation of God. Their names are written in

heaven and they are sharing in the body & blood of Christ. Watching sisters & brothers communing together with Christ - is 'a whale of a time' that you just don't get anywhere else.

When we baptise people into God's family, once again, worshippers seem to automatically have 'a whale of a time' watching salvation bestowed upon people. We watch it bestowed upon babies, upon children, upon adults – whoever we can get our wet hands on, in the name of the Triune God. We know that the Holy Spirit goes to work in baptism, and it give us confidence that God is ever-faithful & gracious. We may not use very much water, but we still have 'a whale of a time' watching a baptism.

Watching salvation come to people is surely the best reason for rejoicing. Perhaps you have a story to tell, where you have watched people respond to some encouragement that you have given them - about God, about the Baptism, about the Christian faith. Watching salvation come to people is surely the best reason for rejoicing.

In Luke 10, Jesus told his disciples that they were watching some pretty good stuff. Their gospel sharing worked – it paid off. They were a bit surprised how well things went. Jesus explained that the ancient prophets & kings would have loved to have watched a flood of people come to the kingdom of God. They would have loved to have heard the Good News that the disciples heard from Jesus. What the disciples & missionaries were watching - was something to behold.

Sometimes you may feel like the kings & prophets – wanting to watch salvation come to someone you know. You may need to keep praying & trying to find ways to encourage someone further towards God.

Or sometimes you may feel like the disciples & missionaries, rejoicing as you watch 'faith actively working' with strength & passion.

But whether we have a time of waiting; or whether we have a time of watching, let us rejoice in the salvation of God. Your names are written in heaven. God bless you all with 'a whale of a time' as you rejoice in all that God is doing. Amen.