

March 5, 2023

Week 24 - Ruth Judges Proverbs

Sup lads, Sorry I am late today! I had such a good Sunday I forgot to write this last night. This week was PACKED and the next week is even bigger. Last week we studied through Ruth, Judges, and did an outloud of Proverbs with a small assignment, and this next week is 1st and 2nd Samuels together, which right now feels almost like an impossible task to finish but I am excited to see God move this week as our school feels very crunched for time.

Ruth is a beautiful story about a woman named Naomi and her daughter-in-law Ruth. In this story we see a Moabite woman get used in the lineage of Jesus, and farther above it in Joshua you see Rahab the prostitute. Rahab actually marries Salmon the father of Boaz, so this tells us that God uses faith over heritage or culture. The faith of Rahab and Ruth allowed God to give a line all the way to Jesus. The one act in Ruth I hope to give clarity to is the threshing floor. By Ruth uncovering his feet I believe it isn't a sexual act at all, but instead a beautiful act of submission, and a bridal act, Ruth is asking Boaz to save her, redeeming her and Naomi, this is a beautiful act by Ruth and shows her faith, a foreigner coming into the country knowing nothing but Naomi, but trusting that what Naomi tells her is true and will bring her into the country with safety and provision. The other key wording is "spread your wings over". You see in Exodus 25:20 that the cherubim spread their wings over the mercy seat, and the mercy seat is over the law, giving us an image that the LORD is protecting his seat and he is above the Law with the Mercy seat, which is an image that the LORD values his people over the Law, and that he will protect the people as well. Just as Ruth asks for protection from Boaz, the original readers would immediately think about the Ark of the Covenant and the Cherubim spreading their wings over the Ark.

Judges is a Book that might scare a lot of Christians, or kids, or anybody really. There is a massive cycle throughout the whole Book, and it goes like this, Israel does evil in the eyes of the LORD, LORD get's angry, Israel Repents, LORD rescues, and then as soon as the Judge dies, the cycle restarts. All the Judges seemed to have faults, (except for the few one verse Judges), this book follows the theme that, *"in those days there was no king in Israel, everyone did what was right in His own eyes."* All of Israel was making a King of themselves and not giving God the glory as King, We see that in the rest of the Bible the Israelites want a King, giving them a man to unite them not God to unite them. Man can never be the King over Man only God can truly be the King.

And last but not least, **Proverbs**, a book that has got tiny little nuggets of wisdom constantly spat at you. We didn't do a deep study on this book just a read through, but when reading it ask yourself what it means, meditate on it, ask God what he wants to show you.

Sorry for not going more in depth with it all! We are charting all of 1st and 2nd Samuel this week so my brain is swimming a little. I hope you all have a blessed day and week as winter back home is on the tailend and the final push towards spring and summer is right around the corner.

Until then Grace and Peace be with you.

March 12, 2023

Week 25 - Samuels

Sup lads, I forgot my newsletter again. I am having too much fun here so I apologize for that. This past week was hectic. We charted **1st and 2nd Samuel**, I had 27 charts but some students had 40+, so, a huge week. The SBS leaders call it Big Boy Week and I am grateful to have finished it and gotten out of it what I did.

The book follows 3 main characters of Samuel, Saul and David. Samuel was the last judge and the one to anoint both David and Saul. Saul was a king after man's heart and David was a king after God's Heart and this is shown by both of their sins. When Saul sinned he made excuses and blamed something for his sin, when David sinned he went straight to God and repented his sin. With this he sought God's heart and wanted to be looking for God's approval and not man's.

I want to talk a little bit about the David and Bathsheba chapters. In those chapters only David sinned. Bathsheba followed purification laws and cleaned herself, well David sought after another woman, laid with her and then killed her husband. The punishment for him should have been death, he should have died but he was saved because he chose to repent and go to God for forgiveness, and because he did this God forgave him. So I want you guys to know that David sinned and that's it.

I also want to talk a little bit about Kings, Saul's Character? He was handsome... Look at key words like this David was ruddy and handsome but was forgotten or left behind by his brothers, 1st Sam Ch 16:6-13 this shows Saul was loved by the people and stood apart, while David was forgotten and left behind. The same is true about Absalom. He had beautiful hair and was handsome. What about his Character?... Man looks at what he can see, while God looks at the heart. Both of these are great books and build the start of the fall for Israel to leave the promised land.

This week we have Song of Songs or Song of Solomon and Ecclesiastes and then one more week until spring break. I will update you guys again next week
Until then Grace and Peace be with you.

March 19, 2023

Week 26 - Song of Songs and Ecclesiastes

Sup lads, Getting right back into it with 2 fantastic books. **Song of Songs** (SOS)and Ecclesiastes. It was a nice chill week after Samuels but unfortunately tension has risen a lot in the school recently. I won't update on my newsletter but if you are interested in what has been going on I am more than happy to update you.

This week I had a great chance to do a lot of extra work, which was preaching in small groups, leading a small group, and then a deeper study on SOS and I found it a beautiful poetry, comparing it to perfect love; how God loves us individually is like how Solomon loved that woman. Now it is debated if Solomon wrote the song but he wrote 3000 proverbs and composed a 1000 songs, 1 Kings 4:29-34, so it is likely one of his 1000 songs made it and I think this was that song. He probably wrote it at the early stage of his reign when love was new and exciting. It is a beautiful song with lots of connections to God's love and the gift God gave to man which is love.

Now **Ecclesiastes** is possibly one of my new favourite books of the bible, the audience is youth and I believe Solomon wrote it which would put it at 970-930 BC but it could also be written at 480 BC when they come back into Israel. Anyway this whole book is wisdom and I love it. I saw the meaning of life in this book and it made me very content because life is simple. Look at God and make him your main focus, He will give you all you

need, our purpose is to seek him all our days and live after him and life will work out. Ecclesiastes has a format where it could be Solomon in the middle but the start and end look to be a different author but hopefully it is Solomon because that looks like a repentance and that means that Solomon is in Heaven, otherwise he is likely in Hell.

This next week is the last week of the Quarter and we are going to read Kings to finish it. I am excited for a break and resting in God's presence. I will update you guys again through the break! I hope you all stay blessed.

Until then Grace and Peace be with you

March 26, 2023
Week 27 - Kings

Sup lads, last week of the quarter, marking 2/3rds done on paper but the last quarter is 10 weeks so it is moving fast which is alarming, but I am excited to be home and sad to leave. My prayer recently is just that God will help me cherish this time and enjoy this season. I know that I get to come home eventually so I have been praying to continue enjoying fellowship and studying while I am here.

This book was one of the harder books I charted. It is a very repetitive cycle similar to Judges but with a lot less detail, if you read through it, take note of how many verses some of the Kings get and that will tell that they are emphasized more and are important to the story. Jeroboam and Ahab in specific are people that set the stage. After them, the author will say that the king didn't follow the commands of God and walked in the sin of Jeroboam and led Israel to sin.

The background of this book: I think Jeremiah wrote it but it is unknown, Jeremiah would have written it because he is a prophet at the time of Josiah and he was one of the last kings before the exile, but it also could have been written at the end of exile, the important thing is when reading to think of who wrote it and then keep that thought in the back of your mind.

I am excited to study the prophets because each King had some prophet that was living, similar to Acts in the new testament where it follows Paul's life and then you see when and where he wrote all the Epistles, that is like Kings and prophets so I can't wait to study them!

Currently I am on my 4th day of break and I have lost track of time.... it's why I am late on this newsletter so I am sorry about that, I will update you guys again next week on what adventures I get up to!
Until then Grace and Peace be with you.

April 2, 2023

Week 28 - Spring Break

Sup lads, Just finishing spring break. We had a very restful time there with 4 guys and 1 girl on base so it was extremely quiet compared to the 70 that are normally on base. I just rested by reading Lord of the Rings, going fishing, watching a few movies and then hanging with our school leader.

Over the break I went to Gold Coast and bought winter clothes from the outlet stores. The Canadian in me doesn't like buying swimwear, apparently only fleeces and flannels! But once I leave this weather I will be prepped for Canada again.

I climbed the tallest mountain around us, it was a 300m climb and it felt so weird because I am used to the Rocky Mountains. Aside from what I have been doing God has been putting it on my heart to cherish this last quarter because it is only 11 weeks and after this our school will never be fully together again so I want to enjoy this time and not wish it away; after all, I will be home in 11 weeks and then I will be able to meet with some of you again and tell you about my school year!

Our next book is Job which we aren't charting and then Amos which we will have a seminar on for prophet literature, after this week we will only have 22 books left in the Bible. 2/3rds of the way through the Bible and the last quarter only has 4 big books, Isaiah, Ezekiel, Jeremiah and Chronicles, and then Matthew at the very end of the year so I feel like it is going to fly by and I am very excited for it but want to cherish the time so that I still capture everything God wants to show me.

I can't wait to update you guys again with a regular newsletter and tell you what God is doing in his story! Until then Grace and Peace be with you.

April 9, 2023

Week 29 - Job and Amos

Sup lads, 1st week back, last quarter only 11 weeks left of this school, it is crazy and it is going so fast! We have 22 books left and we will do 6 in one week, so it is going by very very quickly. I hope life back home is treating you all well and you are getting ready to welcome in Spring and enjoy the gift of God's creation!

Job is a book that is surrounded in suffering and we didn't actually chart it, but we did an assignment which I will share with you. It's a little long but if you wanna skim over just go to question 3.

Job's Friends' POV on suffering (300 words)

Eliphaz - Chapter 4:7 "Do the innocent ever perish, no they only prosper!" So, obviously Job isn't innocent because otherwise he wouldn't be suffering. Ch 5:8 "As for me I would seek God," basically telling Job that he should repent for his sins and seek God to redeem him; subtle accusation that Job isn't innocent without knowing the story. Ch 15:4 "Doing away with the fear of God," Job doesn't fear God and he is suffering because he isn't fearing God and following his commands. But Ch 1:1 says there was a man blameless and upright, one who feared God so this doesn't make sense. Ch 22:21 "Agree with God and be at peace thereby good will come to you", so Eliphaz says that clearly Job did something so wicked that he can't actually do anything for himself until he comes to God

Bildad - "Suffering is caused by sin and unrepented sin" 8:6 8:20. He thinks that Job's suffering is caused by sin and that if Job hadn't sinned then all this bad wouldn't happen to him and suffering wouldn't occur. In

Chapter 18, Bildad again talks about God and the Wicked saying in verse 20 that “such dwellings of the unrighteous are places of people who don’t know God”, basically telling him that he is wicked and possessed and that he doesn’t know God and that is why he is suffering. In chapter 25 Bildad says “all is God’s and man is simply a maggot, not really worth anything, man can’t even match God.” Conclusion of Bildad is that suffering is caused by human actions and man is so flawed that perfect or imperfect suffering happens because of the sin in their life

Zophar - Ch 11: 6 “know that what God expects of you is less than your guilt deserves.” So he feels that Job is so evil that whatever he did, his punishment is actually merciful, suffering is from evil. Ch 20:5 Exulting of Wicked is short and Joy of godless is but for a moment, so wicked are going to suffer on earth, they will get temporary love or satisfaction and then it will all turn to suffering.

Elihu - Ch 32-37 “God is Just” Ch 34:35 Job speaks without knowledge and his words are without insight so God is Just in Job’s suffering because Job shouldn’t ever be able to understand what God is doing. Elihu continues about God’s Justness and God’s Greatness and says that suffering by God is an unknowable thing, is it from God, or Satan, who is it? Suffering is God’s and man is below God.

God’s POV on suffering (200 words)

Satan is allowed to tempt it isn’t God who actually causes suffering but rather God allows Suffering by giving Satan enough power to attack and afflict suffering. God doesn’t enjoy suffering but 1 Cor 10:13 No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability but with the temptation he will also provide a way of escape, that you may be able to endure it. So, God doesn’t like suffering. His character is against it and he actually wants his people to thrive and grow and not suffer. But then again in Deuteronomy his warning is for his people to not sin and throw away the promise, but when they do in Judges and Kings instead of God’s wrath being the cause for the suffering, instead it is God’s faithfulness to his promise and that is why the Israelites are suffering, is because of the justice in his promise not because God wanted his people to suffer. 1 Peter 4:16 Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in that name. Almost a trial from God that followers of him are going to suffer, but it is their choice to choose God and choose not to suffer in self pity but rejoice in the gift of suffering.

My POV on suffering

I think suffering sucks, and I wish life could be perfect, but it is a glorious chance to seek God and look for him and try to choose God. Recently in my first world mindset I have felt a lot of suffering, it is little things that are trying to distract me from God, and I honestly hate it because I don’t know why Christians have the most powerful God and yet we suffer and have to deal with pain and heartbreak and life loss. Why does God allow this? I think it is to show that we need him. We need God. All people suffer like this, Christian or not, but the blessing of God is that he will walk with me through any pain and anguish, which allows me to lean on God and ask him to help me, to heal me and to walk me through this suffering. So my stance on suffering is that God allows it, he doesn’t like it and that as a Christian I am called to choose God and that is the hardest choice that I will make, having to lean on God and rely on him to heal me is the greatest blessing I get.

AMOS

Now, Amos is a book that deals with destruction and promise of the Israel ending. Israel is destroyed in 722 by Assyria and that is the end of Israel in the Bible. After this, Judah comes back into the promised land but Israel as a whole never comes back. Amos was just a shepherd God called to be a prophet and he is clearly looked down upon but he is still following God's heart which challenged me to persevere

I will try and update you guys more as the Prophets go on but we are currently learning about Oracles, Promise, Lawsuit and Woe oracles and I will debunk those and give you examples from my Micah and Hosea newsletter next week

Until then Grace and Peace be with you

April 16, 2023

Week 30 - Micah and Hosea

Sup lads, BIG 30! That's a lot of weeks..... This week was a much brighter week, it was the last week we would have DTS with us, they left for outreach this morning at 3:30 am heading off to both Japan and Morocco so if you want to pray for them that they will have unity and strength and energy as they give 8 weeks to God in the nations.

In SBS we did Micah and Hosea, both books were amazing. **Micah** is about the coming destruction of Israel by Assyria and the destruction of Jerusalem as well which would come later. Israel was taken into exile in 722, and Judah in 586. Micah is kind of a last call to hope for restoration, damage will still come and they will go into exile but if they seek God then they might get his presence while they are in the exile.

What happened to Israel was Assyria took them and scattered them throughout their Kingdom so they would intermarry and lose the bloodline and lose the people of Israel.

Hosea is a beautiful book starting with Hosea and Gomer. Hosea is a high status man who was a prophet and generally called to a high standard, but God calls him to marry Gomer a prostitute, or an unfaithful servant whether she was a prostitute or if she was unfaithful changes in translation, but it perfectly mirrors the story of God with us! Hosea represents God, blameless and holy and God decides to create Human knowing that we would sin and fall away from him, like Hosea likely felt with Gomer when he was told to marry her. She represents us and she falls from Hosea, the faithful upright person who hasn't done anything wrong. God's Love is so beautiful because it continues and never runs out but instead runs after us. This short story sets up the rest of the book for Hosea to speak from God's heart. Heartbroken and destroyed is how he would feel, because God is heartbroken over us and heartbroken over his people who turned away and walked into sin.

We had a preaching on this book, and I chose the topic wilderness and I want to share with you what God revealed to me.

Now wilderness can look like many things to anybody it isn't just a desert or a forest secluded from society, but I think it can look like either a natural wilderness like a forest or desert where you don't have any comfort and you have to fight for survival and you are naturally away from everybody, but the other one I have found more often is modern wilderness, which looks like your average city life but you feel so empty, you have comfort and you don't have to fight for survival, but in the end it can be isolating and empty. Why? God's heart isn't for us to suffer or feel like we are in a wilderness, is it? I certainly don't think so and that's because in Genesis 1:26-27 it says 26 Then God said, "Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the

fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.” 27 So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.

God's plan wasn't for us to suffer or to be hurt but it happened anyway and I think that this breaks his heart but it isn't his choice.

Hosea 2:3 3Otherwise I will strip her naked and make her as bare as on the day she was born, I will make her like a desert, turn her into a parched land, and slay her with thirst.

God shows in these passages that He will do it, he will take it all away. Why?

To seek God, by being naked and empty what is their left to fill you? Only God can fill us and we see that in Hosea 2:14-15 14 “Therefore I am now going to allure her; I will lead her into the wilderness and speak tenderly to her. 15 There I will give her back her vineyards, and will make the Valley of Achor a door of hope. There she will respond as in the days of her youth, as in the day she came up out of Egypt.

Israel had just suffered for 400 years in Egypt and when they came out they were PRAISING, but then they started complaining again as soon as they lost that comfort, they lost God when it was hard. God wants us, he wants us naked and empty. What better vessel than one that has nothing but God; with just God he can redeem us and he can fill us. For me I felt like SBS was a wilderness and really it is. I am 12,450km away from home and with a 16 hour time difference, I have had to lay down relationships, friendships, job opportunities, money, comfort. And for what? God. As soon as I acknowledged that God had called me here to meet him in a wilderness without anything that I know or am comfortable with, he met me, he told me I have 68 days left, 68 days until this wilderness is gone and I go home to comfort. What are you going to do with those 68 days? I get the beautiful opportunity to seek God with 0 distraction, I don't have to worry about jobs back home because there aren't any, I don't have to worry about relationships or friendships because I'm 12,450km away. I'm just a dude living and seeking God and that is such a beautiful thing.

So what is your Wilderness? I challenge you to seek God, if you feel empty or lost then seek God and ask Him, “What do you want me to learn and grow?” I've learned that it will take time and perseverance but God will meet you and that will bring you to a beautiful place of rest and peace and joy, whatever you do seek him and he will meet you. I truly love you guys and hope that you find God in your wilderness

Which is why I have chosen what to do when I come home, very short term so far, but I fly home on June 23rd leaving Brisbane airport at 10:00am and getting back to Calgary at 10:41am on June 23rd, I will then spend 8 days at home and then go to Pine Lake Christian Camp and hopefully serve them for 3 weeks as a counsellor. With that, I am hoping for very minimal support just for those 3 weeks. All I am looking for is gas money so I can make it up there and back. During those 3 weeks I will continue to write newsletters to update you guys on some ministry and why it is so important!

In the 8 days of rest I want to meet with you guys and answer any questions you guys have or show you the work I have done well down under, whether that is going to a coffee shop or walking in a local park. I will happily meet you guys wherever you are.

Until then Grace and Peace be with you

April 23, 2023

Week 31 - Isaiah

Sup lads, this was a big week, 66 chapters! It was a challenging week for sure but it was doable, just a lot of work. My schedule was gym at 6am-7:15-30ish then class Monday, Wednesday, Friday until 12, and then charting work from 1-9 Monday to Friday! So it was packed, but so worth it.

The book is split at chapter 40, 1-39 is a lot of judgment and oracles on the nations and Judah, and then 40-66 has a lot of redemption. The book clearly points towards Jesus coming and saving Israel, in Isaiah 52:13-15 and then 53 it talks about Jesus's death, how he will be killed as a criminal but buried with the rich, he will be pierced for our transgressions, despised, rejected, no form, no majesty, marred beyond human recognition, it explains how Jesus was crucified, buried in Joseph's tomb, tortured beyond recognition, and rejected by his own people, Jesus would be pierced with the spear. Now the craziest thing about this was Isaiah is talking about the crucifixion 400 years before crucifixion was invented, which shows how divine God is, and how he planned to have Jesus come back and save them!

I would definitely recommend reading **Isaiah** 52-53. It will give you clarity on the prophecy of Jesus and the Saviour of Jesus coming back!

Next week it will be a 6 book small week, we study Habakkuk and Zephaniah, Joel and Obadiah, Jonah and Nahum. After this week we have 13 more books left in the Bible. I will try to update you guys with as much info as possible on all these small prophets but bear with me because there are a lot of books.
Until then Grace and Peace be with you

April 30, 2023

Week 32 - Habakkuk & Zephaniah, Joel and Obadiah, Jonah and Nahum

Sup lads, welcome to small book week, we are studying through 6 books this week. I have already finished 2 and I have 4 more to go so far. I plan to just give you guys little updates as I go so this first one will be Habakkuk and Zephaniah.

Habakkuk (Hab) is a book that is formatted like a lament, Hab complains to God about the situation in Judah first, how he is mad because they are so evil/. God's response is interesting, it is a you won't know what I am doing if I told you. How often do we do this where we don't believe what God is doing in our lives. Hab complains again asking God why would he look to evil if he is pure? God is doing it because of covenant faithfulness, he told them that he would punish them if they were disobedient and he is doing that! God tells that he will judge the Chaldeans (Babylon) after, but they are a critical part of his plan, so Habakkuk ends with a prayer and rejoices in the Lord. This ending cements a lament, getting any and all frustration out on God and talking to him instead of talking to people, then praise God and rejoice with him, give him glory for what he has done. It is a very important thing to do if you feel angry at God for looking at your plan instead of God's plan.

Zephaniah had a different theme, written around the same time as Habakkuk, 610s, this book deals with what the Original Hearers thought the day of the Lord would look like and they are looking at this event as a time when God will build them back into a strong nation with peace and lots of land, but in reality it will end with them getting booted out of the promise land and destruction coming to them. Zephaniah is flipping the script on how they imagine it will look. At the end of all of it Israel will be restored, but Judah went away? The remnant of Judah will become Israel and they will get the blessing and promise of both Israel and Judah.

Joel and Obadiah, these two books were good! a different change of pace but good. Both were difficult to place dating wise because they could be either 9th century BC or 5th century BC, so well before exile or just after the exile.

Joel has a key theme of Locust, the swarming, hopper, destroyer, and cutter, it could mean literal locust but I saw it as a figurative Locust and that is the 4 world powers that persecuted the Israelites: Assyria, Babylon, Persia and Rome. Now I know Greece was in between Rome and Persia but that was also during the 300 year silence from Malachi to Jesus, so it's hard to say how much they suffered in this time of life so I think it means Rome instead. The book has an interchange of destruction and restoration of land and people so chapter 1 is destruction of land, 2:1-17 is destruction of people. 2:18-32 is Restoration of land and chapter 3 is restoration of people. Because of the restoration of the land and people I think this book is written post exile when they had no king and little land, just priests and the temple, which would put it around 515 BC.

Obadiah is similar dating wise but it deals with judgment of Edom, and how Edom will be scattered, shattered and desolated while Israel or Jacob will be exalted. This book tells of judgment to another nation outside of Israel and how the brother bond and family bond should have kept the 2 nations close, but instead one is being destroyed and one is being exalted. God is showing that he will judge other nations outside of Israel as well. Sin is sin in God's eyes and it deserves punishment, regardless of who they are.

Jonah and Nahum were the last two books of small book week but I think they struck home the most.

Nahum is a book concerning Nineveh, how it is a terrible city who needs repentance or they will be judged. Nineveh was the capital of Assyria, it had a river running through the city, in case siege came they could grow crops and have fresh water, they had piles of bones outside the main gate so anybody coming in would have to walk past all the death that Nineveh has caused. Nahum writes an oracle concerning the Judgement and destruction of the city. This whole oracle against Nineveh is fulfilled in 612 B.C. when Babylon destroys the city.

Jonah, this book was completely different, I won't explain the story because of how famous it is but I will go into little details, first one is when he runs away, he is running as far away as possible and then is sleeping in the storm which means he would have been happy with even death if it meant he didn't have to go to Nineveh. Second he made a vow to go to Nineveh in the fish, but he didn't want to go because he knew God's character of being forgiving and merciful so he knew if they repented that he would forgive them. His anger in the end is very human of him. If you were the Judge to Hitler and got to choose life or death what would you choose? Most humans now would choose death but God chooses life every time. This action is exactly the same with Nineveh and Jonah acted exactly like humans now do. And then Jonah and the plant, Jonah's anger at something out of his control but a gift from God is also very human, how often do we get mad at something we can't control. God is above man and creation, we just have to serve and love him.

We do a final application at the end of every book, and at the end of this book I wanted to pray about everything I do in my day and then faithfully obey what God tells me, I don't know when I will do it but I will tell you guys when I do!

At the end of the week I had a little taste of home and made my Grandma Lynne's Master Mix recipe. So I was able to have pancakes, biscuits and tea and enjoy fellowship with the friends God has given me here! I hope you find joy in the little things!

Until then Grace and Peace be with you