

Make Room

I really feel that God has been speaking to me about this recently and I want to challenge us this morning on hearing from God for ourselves and seeking him wholeheartedly.

Buckfast Abbey – Seeking God – wisdom/plans for my life/church

I felt God impress on my heart **Jeremiah 29:11**

Really? Is that just scripture muscle memory? (favourite verse)

Jeremiah 29:11 SLIDE 1

11 For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.

We all love **verse 11** and highlight it in our bibles and put it on fridge magnets and bookmarks ...

Plans – prosper – no harm – hope and a future

We all like these things...

I felt the Spirit say “You want plans, to know the future and hope – you want to hear from me – **keep reading.**”

What about the next two verses? **12&13... SLIDE 2**

12 Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. **13** You will seek me and find me when you seek me with **all your heart.**

Context – in exile in Babylon - 70 years before this promise and prophecy would come to pass.

Plans take time, prophecies take time, not everything is instant, and we need to wait on and trust in the Lord.

Plans – personal – daily – future – 10 years SK, 7 years ME

- BIG picture - Cyrus

We all want to know God's plans for us.

We all want to believe in the promise of hope and a future.

We all want to hear from God and know what's coming but we miss our part in verses **12 & 13**

12 Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. **13** You will seek me and find me when you **seek me with all your heart.**

I felt God speak to me in 2 ways -

Scripture and through his **Spirit**.

Scripture - Seek me with *all your heart*

Integrity – All in

Wholehearted

In my daily readings as I spent time with the Lord, **all your heart** kept coming up.

Deuteronomy 26:16-17 SLIDE 3

The Lord your God commands you this day to follow these decrees and laws; carefully observe them **with all your heart and with all your soul**. You have declared this day that the Lord is your God and that you will walk in obedience to him, that you will keep his decrees, commands and laws—that you will listen to him.

Deuteronomy 30:1-4 SLIDE 4&5

When all these blessings and curses I have set before you come on you and you take them to heart wherever the Lord your God disperses you among the nations, and when you and your children return to the Lord your God and obey him **with all your heart and with all your soul** according to everything I command you today, then the Lord your God will restore your fortunes and have compassion on you and gather you again from all the nations where he

scattered you. Even if you have been banished to the most distant land under the heavens, from there the Lord your God will gather you and bring you back.

Also, first two stanzas of Psalm 119 just this morning (Sunday)

All your heart – Integrity – All in

Integrity is the quality of being honest and showing a consistent and uncompromising adherence to strong moral and ethical principles and values.

All your heart - Wholehearted

showing or characterized by complete sincerity and commitment.

completely and sincerely devoted, determined, or enthusiastic.

Why Wholeheartedly?

God says, “You will seek me and find me when you **seek me with all your heart.**”

When we seek him with all our heart, we find him and become like him.

SK Naval Chaplain – LHOM – MASSIVE – many others talk the talk but you’re different – you walk the walk.

Why Wholeheartedly?

We will find him and hear from him. Plans.

Why Wholeheartedly?

It gives credibility to our witness.

SLIDE 6 Baptism photo – two good looking guys!

Past that – two people – Tony and me.

Tony bodybuilder – me body-wobbler!

I justify my lack of progress and poor choices by thinking I go to the gym – know where it is.

Tony – makes good decisions on food, exercise, effort and sleep BECAUSE he goes to the gym.

Gym vs Church

We do the same in church.

I go to church; I love Jesus, I'm saved by grace. Yes AND

Our daily lives have to match up with our weekly statement.

If we want to grow Wholehearted followers of Christ as our mission statement says – we have to be them!

We have to be wholehearted, full of integrity and seeking God with all of our hearts or else be hypocrites.

People want truth, hope and trust. If we are wholehearted and full of integrity in our life with Christ, it is attractive, and we will enable others to become Wholehearted followers of Christ too.

How? - To seek God with all our hearts and to hear from him we must **make room**.

If we want to know God's plans for us, for our future and daily, we need to make room in our lives for him.

Julie Nash – N T Wright – Spirits entwined – always will be.

John 14:10 SLIDE 7

Don't you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you I do not speak on my own authority. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work.

Will you allow a tug of war in your heart or give over room to God's Spirit? Will you make room?

Over the years, one of the most common questions I have is why don't I hear from God?

Back at Buckfast Abbey / Robin

Bench - Sun shining – January - squirrel? Starling and Robin.

Looking. Thanking God - no animal lover, but truly loving this moment. Singing.

God said to me if you want to hear from me, make room.

Don't just take my word for it, let's look at what Jesus did.

John 12:49-50 SLIDE 8

For I did not speak on my own, but the Father who sent me commanded me to say all that I have spoken. I know that his command leads to eternal life. So whatever I say is just what the Father has told me to say."

Mark 1:35 SLIDE 9

Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed.

Make room – 2 services – rotas – GOD!!

Prayer Room – Mon Tues Thurs 10-2

Early morning pray – Lent?

Where are you going to make room, seek God with all your heart, wholeheartedly, and start to hear his plans for you, the church and beyond? Sung response & Prayer / Appeal

Community Group questions and discussion points.

1. Read **Jeremiah 29:11** together. Is this verse familiar to you? How does it make you feel when you read it?
2. Do the same with **Jeremiah 29:12&13**. How do these verses sound in comparison?
3. Now read these verses in reverse – **13,12,11**. Do you see a link?
If we seek God with all our heart we will find him. Then we will call on him and pray to him and he will listen. Then we will know the plans that he has for us, plans to prosper us and not to harm us, plans to give us hope and a future.
4. What did Paul say about seeking God with all our hearts? What other words did he use? *Integrity and wholeheartedly*. What do these words mean to you? What definitions did Paul give?
5. What example did Paul give of being full of integrity and approaching something wholeheartedly?
Gym – Tony the bodybuilder and Paul the body wobbler.
 Why have these two men turned out differently?
 Look at gym or church as a justification for our behaviour and choices?
 Does this convict you in any way?
6. Paul said that if we are to make room for all the new people that God is bringing into the kingdom and our church, that we need to show them what a wholehearted follower of Christ looks like.
“Plymouth Christian Centre exists to love and serve people, enabling them to become wholehearted followers of Christ.”
 Are we doing that? If not, what do we need to do about it?
7. If we are to be wholehearted followers of Christ God calls us to be throughout the bible, what do we need to do?
Make room.
8. Recall Paul’s story from Buckfast Abbey with the Robin. What did God say to Paul about making room?
9. What did Jesus do about making room to seek the Father?

- 10.** Where can you make room for God in your life?
What can you delete? (phone storage example)
What can you move or rearrange?
What can you do to make room in your life so that you can hear from God and seek Him wholeheartedly?
- 11.** What does God promise when we make room for Him and seek him wholeheartedly?

If we seek God with all our heart we will find him. Then we will call on him and pray to him and he will listen. Then we will know the plans that he has for us, plans to prosper us and not to harm us, plans to give us hope and a future.

- 12.** Why not make room now to seek God together in prayer and commit to seek him wholeheartedly.