

# Brad Carr Psalm 23 - 2 October 2022

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## Overview

Brad Carr has extensive experience as a pastor in New Zealand and overseas. He is a leader in New Zealand in the Living Stones network, and Overseas with the Barnabas School of Leadership. He is currently part of the teaching team at Gracecity Church in Auckland.

Psalm 23 is possibly the most famous psalm in the Bible, unpacking two powerful metaphors about what Yahweh is really like. He is a gentle shepherd who guides and leads us, and He is a gracious host, who welcomes us into the family. He is therefore a God who is worthy of our deepest trust.

*(interesting fact: Six of the top 11 verses from 2019 on BibleGateway are from Psalm 23 - that's all the verses of the psalm)*

1. Wait and see if there is a Video I can watch first?
2. Q2
3. Read through v12-30. This is a call to a counter-culture gospel. Pick up on the 'fears of this world', society, our culture that Paul attacks directly. Which verse encourages you to live fearlessly or more boldly, why?
4. Verse 21 is often called the hinge of all of the book of Philippians: "For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain."
  - a. How would you explain this verse to a questioning friend?
  - b. How could they see it was true from how you lived your life?
  - c. How can you encourage one another to live as if this is true?

5. Out of your discussion today, spend time interceding; asking God to help our church, our life group to:
  - a. Make sure Christ is preached
  - b. have sufficient courage
  - c. continue to rejoice
  - d. conduct ourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ

# Reuben Munn Philippians 1:18b-25 - 4 September 2022

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## Overview

Reuben is a pastor from Shore Community Church, one of our partner churches in the Living Stones Network we are part of. This week's one-off message is one of encouragement, and follows on well from teaching about the persecuted church and placing our trust in God as we have been encouraged to do in Habakkuk the last few weeks.

In the face of the fear and anxiety that is becoming more and more prevalent Reuben brings us a message, a message originally from Paul in prison awaiting possible execution in Rome. What is our response, what then shall we do with this?

1. Have you ever been in a literal life and death situation?
2. Reuben used the analogy of Apps vs Operating System in unpacking 'to live is Christ'. What reaction or thoughts did this picture provoke for you?
3. Read through v12-30. This is a call to a counter-culture gospel. Pick up on the 'fears of this world', society, our culture that Paul attacks directly. Which verse encourages you to live fearlessly or more boldly, why?
4. Verse 21 is often called the hinge of all of the book of Philippians: "For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain."
  - a. How would you explain this verse to a questioning friend?
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  - c. How can you encourage one another to live as if this is true?

5. Out of your discussion today, spend time interceding; asking God to help our church, our life group to:
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  - b. have sufficient courage
  - c. continue to rejoice
  - d. conduct ourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ

# Open Doors - 10 July 2022

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## Overview

In recent weeks we've been walking through the book of 1 Thessalonians. It's a letter Paul wrote to the church in Thessalonica that had experienced significant persecution.

*"We sent Timothy... to strengthen and encourage you in your faith so that no one would be unsettled by these trials. For you know quite well that we are destined for them." 1 Thess 3:2-3*

In New Zealand, it can be quite difficult to grasp what that is like. So, we invited Mike Burrows from Open Doors to speak this Sunday. Open Doors is an organisation that advocates for the persecuted church across the world. We asked him to help us see how persecution is happening to the church around the world today and what lessons the New Zealand church can draw from this.

1. What are the characteristics that you would use to describe living in New Zealand to someone overseas?
  - a. How do these characteristics impact you living as a 'total follower of Jesus'?

2. Imagine that New Zealand is now geographically lodged between Syria and Iraq.
  - a. How do you think this would change our society?



- b. How do you think this would affect how you lived out your faith?
3. As you think about what Mike shared on Sunday, what are the key lessons you think we can learn as a church?
  4. One of the ways we can make a difference is to commit to pray for the global church. You may want to pray as a response to what Mike shared.

You could also check out their website where they post stories and share prayer needs.

Go to: [How To Pray For Persecuted Christians](#)

