



Texts to Keep Us Going and Growing

Many of us have “favourite” Bible verses—texts that not only state the truths of the gospel plainly but impact and even direct us personally. As I complete my time as Principal (with thanks to God), I thought I would share three Bible passages that have kept me

going and growing in devotion to Christ, his gospel and his people.

The first text is Matthew 6:33: “But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.” God used this verse to help me take the position as “Teacher” at the Perth Centre for Applied Christian Studies (which merged with Westminster Theological College [Perth] to form Trinity). I had been agonizing with the decision for a couple of weeks, uncertain of the impacts and changes involved for our family and those close to us in our church. An older brother quoted this verse in his prayer and I gladly pass on this promise of Christ to any others who strive to serve him and the gospel in the midst of the responsibilities and challenges that come our way.

The second text is Jesus’s promise to Paul when he pleaded that his “thorn in the flesh” be removed (2 Cor 12:7–10): “My grace is

sufficient for you, my power is made perfect in weakness.’ Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ’s power may rest on me” (v. 9). Knowing that the overflowing mercy of the crucified and risen Christ is “sufficient” for all our needs, that God’s saving purposes are “perfected” as we testify to him even in our weakness, and that Christ’s power “dwells” upon us puts everything else into place.

The third text is Psalm 110, which paints the majesty and meekness of his Son so vividly. David is shown the exaltation of his “Lord” to the right hand of God, where he sits “until all of his enemies are brought under his feet” (v. 1). The means by which the nations come under the saving rule of Christ is the extension of the “sceptre” from his right hand, which I take to be the gospel (v. 2, and see Psalm 2). Then “willing troops” are brought alongside this King to join him in his work; they are arrayed in “holy splendour” and never lag in zeal (v. 3). What a stunning picture of the power of the gospel and the importance of the local church in God’s salvation plan!

The second part of the Psalm takes us into the heat of the battle, where the gospel is presently executing divine judgment (vv. 5–7 and see John 5:21–29). In this context of trials, the “Lord” is declared to be “a priest forever in the order of Melchizedek” (v. 4).

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Don and Athena West

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In Memory of Pastor Shayne Goldfinch

Shayne Goldfinch was diagnosed with metastasized cancer in July 2024, but they could not identify the primary cause. He passed away from that cancer in September of this year, leaving behind his mother, wife Melanie, and four young adult sons: Kaedmon, Zion, Ethan, and Josiah.

As fellow senior pastors and Trinity students, we would meet regularly to talk about ministry and, of course, life. Shayne was pastoring Collie Church of Christ, while I served at the South Bunbury Church of Christ. He had also previously pastored Byford Baptist and was in unpaid leadership at Calvary Chapel Perth

We discussed our joys and frustrations in ministry, our goals, and areas for

personal growth. We prayed for one another, shared resources, and even reminisced about troublesome Trinity staff we had to endure (though I'm sure the opposite is the actual reality!).



Shayne Goldfinch

Shayne lived out the gospel's implications. His conversations were always laced with hope, often punctuated by a parable or scripture. His enthusiasm and love for his Collie congregation were deep, unwavering, and resolute. Though his life was short—he

was only 47 years old—it was abundant, in line with John 10:10. The proof of his rich life was evident in the testimonies of his wife and several sons at his funeral. They spoke of Shayne and Jesus as one, sharing how his walk with Christ led them to a more intimate relationship with him,

along with his love for basketball of course!

He was loved by all and will be missed dearly by those who knew him.

I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day—and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing. 2 Tim 4:7-8

Ps Chris Green

South Bunbury Church of Christ

Texts to Keep Us Going and Growing

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The writer to the Hebrews says this King-Priest "is able to save completely (or forever) those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them" (Heb 7:25). The one who has "ascended into heaven" is fully able to "empathize with our weaknesses", so, brothers and sisters, "let us approach God's throne of grace with confidence that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need" (4:16).

New Principal

With you I register my thanks to God for the announcement of Dan Cole's appointment as the next Principal of Trinity Theological College from January 2025. I know you will be much in prayer for Dan and Emily (and their family) in this time of transition. And please continue in prayer for and support of the College, that it may equip many, many more in "effective Christian service."

With every blessing in Christ,

Don West Principal

TRINITY THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE

Commencement & Graduation 2025

Tuesday 25 February
7:30pm - 9:30pm
 North Coast Church
 154 Balcatta Rd, Balcatta

RSVP by 21 February:
bit.ly/cg-2025

Farewell to Gillian Kirkness

I first remember meeting Gillian Kirkness during my initial interview at Trinity. What I took away from that was a gentle voice and a warm, welcoming smile. Many things have changed both in the College and in her role since then, but those two remain.

Gillian was originally employed as Registrar in May 2005. She moved to being Personal Assistant to the Principal (PA) in March 2015, which eventually morphed into Executive Assistant which added assisting the executive team and being the Council Secretary.


Four things that are uniquely Gillian:

- The “wise confidant”, who listens well and advises sympathetically but thoughtfully, and acts as an advocate to make the situation better.
- The “knowledge base”, who knows who is where and who has been there, and what that means and why it matters. Then draws on that knowledge to get people to ask: have we thought about this?
- The “concerned participator”, who sees gaps (does the event we’re



running in a few days have enough volunteers? Could the room where we’re holding it be a bit cleaner?) and comes up with the ideas to fix them, or just goes ahead and does it herself.

- The “backup”, for just about anyone, who has the trust and the know-how to make it easy for the delegator. And is usually thinking about it before it is asked for.

Gillian loves and cares for Trinity, because she prioritises the gospel and loves the Lord Jesus. I know I speak for both our staff and our students when I say that. 

Joe Triglone
Business Manager

Prayer & Praise

Give thanks for:

- the gathering of around 380 guests for the Trinity Celebration giving thanks to God for his faithfulness since the inception of the College
- the many years of service by Don and Athena West
- the appointment of Dan Cole as the new Principal of Trinity
- the completion of another year training gospel ministry workers

Pray for:

- Dan Cole as he transitions to his new role as Principal
- that there will be a solid intake of students for 2025
- that God will continue to graciously bless the work of equipping people for service
- that we will have a fresh appreciation this Christmas for the wonder and graciousness of God the Father sending his Son as a human babe to die for our sins

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Trinity Celebration:



Becca and Grant Taylor

“Jesus Christ, supreme and sufficient Revealer, Creator, and Redeemer . . . him we proclaim!” This was the tremendous gospel reminder from Kanishka Raffel who spoke from Colossians 1 at the Trinity Celebration, held at North Coast Church on 12 November to coincide with the retirement of Don West as Principal (2003-2023) and of his and Athena’s ministry at the College since 1996. Trinity graduate Tenielle Neda and her band led our singing and performed one of her recent songs, “Miraculous Salvation”.

The gathering of over 350 graduates, students, supporters, staff, family and friends gave thanks to God, prayed, and heard testimonies from graduates and students from the early, middle, and current years. The themes of faculty and admin team availability, pastoral care, prayerful dependence upon God,



Cailey and Kanishka Raffel (Anglican Archbishop of Sydney)

strong community, and deep convictions came through over and again.

Don and Athena acknowledged the privilege and joy of serving the College and its community for 29 years, and of how God works through our weaknesses and places us in challenging situations so that we might depend upon him and that he may obtain all the glory in the magnification of his Son.

All this was a powerful testimony to the power of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the beating heart of God’s purposes revealed in the Bible. So, as the Celebration also made clear, the gospel has been and will continue to be the beating heart of the College.

Grant and Becca Taylor

When I signed up for the MDiv at Trinity after my MTS apprenticeship with UWA Christian Union, I was terrified of learning Greek, especially after struggling with Italian. To my surprise, Greek felt more like maths than a language! I was grateful for Dan Cole and the joy Greek brought me. However, theology classes, with their abstract thinking, were a bigger challenge. I felt behind my classmates, but God provided Aidan Smith, who helped me understand complex topics like IVF ethics and universalism. I’m thankful for the friendship and support of other fellow students as I head towards graduation next year.

Jacinta Patterson

MDiv graduand

Trinity Theological College has profoundly shaped my life. God, in his grace, used Trinity’s gospel-centred foundation to minister to me, especially during challenging seasons. The Bible-based, Christ-centred teaching from the faculty strengthened my walk with Jesus. I was also encouraged by the non-teaching staff, who embodied a genuine gospel-shaped culture. Don’s leadership and Athena’s faithful partnership reflect deep commitment to the gospel and a passion for Jesus’ glory. Their faithfulness has inspired and encouraged me, as it has many others. I am immensely grateful for them and continue to thank God for their impact on this community.

Paul Iswariah

MDiv graduand



Jacinta Patterson and Paul Iswariah

“Him We Proclaim!”



Lachlan (Dean of Geraldton Anglican Holy Cross Cathedral) and Rebecca Edwards

Bec and I were drawn to Trinity for its goal of “Training People for Effective Christian Service.” It wasn’t just about theological study but also about developing pastoral practice. This goal was effectively achieved through rigorous academics, pastoral instruction, and practical modelling. Don and Athena have been exemplary Christian servants. Don, a theologically astute lecturer, has been a trusted mentor and friend for over 20 years, supporting me through both ministry joys and challenges. Bec also deeply values Athena’s genuine care for ministry wives, offering honest insight into the realities of vocational ministry life.

Lachlan and Bec Edwards

BTh 2005 & GradDipDiv 2007

Dan and Emily Cole with Rachael Thyer (College Chair and husband Murray Thornhill on her left)



Over the past 16 years, as students, graduates, and now faculty, Mary Jane and I have seen God’s generosity at Trinity in many ways. We’ve experienced this in rich, deepening friendships with classmates, and through the love and encouragement of

mentors like Don and Athena, Marty and Jenny, and others, both during our studies and in ministry. We’re blessed to serve alongside a remarkable team of colleagues and supported by many who pray for the college. In all these, we see a reflection of God’s infinite generosity and grace, lavished upon us in Christ.

Thom and Mary Jane Bull

MDiv 2012 & GradDipDiv 2009



Thom and Mary Jane Bull

Focus on the Gospel: Reflection on Annual Lecture “Living and Leading Like Jesus”



When I heard the topic of this lecture, I was immediately interested. “Great! This is it!” I thought, “I want to invite my church leaders to attend and be aligned on the most fundamental thing.” So, this event was perfect for our ministry team. I prayed for it, put the event in our church bulletin for weeks, and sent out personal invitations.

So, in the lecture, Gary started by pointing out two important things we have stopped doing in today’s churches:

Firstly, we have stopped encouraging each other to be like Jesus. Our leadership should be more than just a way of thinking or a methodology. Gospel leadership is essentially encouraging people to be like Jesus. We often admire the qualities of “good leadership”, but have we made Christlikeness our everyday task? We should know the danger of reducing “being like Jesus” to a lofty and remote target that is only preached once in a while to an “advanced class”. In all our sermons, studies and prayers, we need to ask: have I been encouraging my church to walk with the Lord every day? Or have I just spent time chasing

people to serve and perform? We should reaffirm the basics: preach the gospel and make clear who Jesus is and what he has done in all things (Col 3:11).


Secondly, we have stopped expecting leaders to lead like Christ. We should expect leaders to show Christ-like character in their leadership. Sometimes, we underestimate this calling to be like Christ, so we end up expecting something extra. This is where we need to lead our congregation to keep digging into the Scriptures so that we can see the depth and greatness of Christ and let him transform our words and actions. Expect your leaders to be like Christ above all else, to put character first, and to move from result-oriented measurements to character-oriented examples, as the Apostle Paul said: “Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ (1 Cor 11:1).

So, what does it look like to serve like Jesus? I have found Gary’s six “both... and...” principles to be very helpful, and I have reflections on each point:

1. **Both dependent on God and committed to working hard** - Being truly dependent on God also means

obeying him and serving his kingdom.

2. **Both confident and humble** - Be loving like Christ and be bold for his truth.
3. **Both using my gift and ready to do anything** - Don’t despise small tasks; do all that is necessary.
4. **Both ready to share ourselves and self-forgetful** – Our sharing should not put us in the centre; people need Jesus.
5. **Both aware of human sinfulness and expect that God will work** – We are all sinful, but no one is beyond redemption; let us be God’s gracious work in people.
6. **Both expecting suffering and pursuing joy** – We are wired to do the easy things and say no to the hard things. But Jesus has called us to walk with him and to die like him. Walking with our Saviour is a great cause for rejoicing.

Finally, we need to pray and ask the Lord to help us in following and being like Jesus. 

Jacob Law

MDiv 2020, Supply Minister at Hope Methodist Church, CMCA

Restoring the Joy in Preaching the Prophets: Insights into the Book of Jeremiah

“Jeremiah feels unwieldy.” It was the day’s opening assertion, and the average punting preacher, teacher, or modest reader in their own private devotions, would tend to agree. We can admit it - Jeremiah feels long, repetitive, and detached from the daily experience of the twenty-first-century Christian. Gary Millar (Principal, Queensland Theological College) sought to change our tune and inflame our wonder in the book, hoping “that many churches would have the preaching of Jeremiah inflicted upon them.”


Gary addressed us in three sessions. In his first session, Gary opened with some meditations on Jeremiah’s remarkable call story (Jeremiah 1). He noted that the Bible reveals surprisingly few theophanic callings and mused that Christians need not be worried if we find ourselves without a direct, divine encounter when called to ministry, or any other life change for that matter. Grand calling or not, God uses people. People like us. Gary highlighted that Jeremiah stands as proof that God mediates his truth to the world through real people and at specific times. In Jeremiah’s case, his mission was to forecast God’s judgment as well as his gracious promise of redemption. Sounds rather like the mission of every Christian.

A notable takeaway from the first session was Jeremiah’s awareness of his own weakness. He knew he couldn’t bear the full weight of his mission on his own. In the same way, ministry workers today often feel inadequate when facing the responsibilities we have been called to—whether it’s preparing a sermon, leading a small group, or having a difficult pastoral conversation. How can we possibly bring about the change of restoration needed in broken or troubled souls? Gary emphasized that while we cannot, God can. Notably, “I am with you” is a Jeremic phrase mentioned 160 times. This steady drumbeat continually reminds the reader of God’s favourable proximity to his people.

In the second session, Gary guided us in the practical exercise of mapping out the structure of Jeremiah. It was during this session that Gary provided helpful considerations for breaking down the book into a teaching series. Refreshingly, he admitted that a precise grasp on the accurate divisions of the book was less crucial than the precise grasp of its central theme and unfolding nature. Gary illuminated the latter for us, revealing how God was informing his obstinate people ahead of time that the entire covenant was about to be recalibrated (the land, the temple, the kingship, etc). Though the God who

said “I am your God, and you are my people” appeared to be walking away, he was sovereignly preparing his people for their future hope.

In between the sessions, the Ministry Matters Conference broke to take part in Trinity’s Tuesday chapel (where Gary preached from 2 Corinthians 12 and 13), and afterwards shared lunchtime with current students. Gary’s third and final session addressed the reality of practical challenges in preaching from Jeremiah. He offered several helpful approaches to handle the book’s fifty-two chapters, such as sectioning it off by theme or movement, or perhaps simply through a highlights reel. He reiterated the essentiality of being intimately familiar with the message and flow of the book to help maintain a forward movement within a series. He forewarned us that we’ll come against two hurdles: the difficulty of preaching from a book with “multiple horizons” (Jeremiah’s time, his reader’s time, and our own time), and the challenge of chapter upon chapter of relentless judgment texts. The session concluded with a sobering reminder that, just as in Jeremiah’s day, our message is not limited to the coming judgment against sin, but also a future hope. Our message remains remarkably similar to Jeremiah’s day: God has promised a new exodus for his covenant-breaking people, and the Lord Jesus himself will be leading us.

All in all, Gary’s talks left us with a fresh appreciation for Jeremiah’s message and a renewed sense of “maybe I can wield this thing after all?” Just as it was God himself who enabled Jeremiah to meet the daunting task of faithfully sharing God’s Word as God instructed him, we can trust that God is with us (in us) to accomplish the same. 

Craig Verdouw

BTh 2011

Minister, Gateway Community Church



