



Sunday 26 February 2017

8th Sunday of Ordinary Time

Stuart Mossman

*Exodus 24:12-end*

*2 Peter 1:16-end*

*Matthew 17:1-9*

*All the readings speak about the **confidence** and **witness** that we have to the truth of God. I'd like to summarise these points, from those readings*

### **Matthew 17:**

#### **The Transfiguration**

We are told in Matthew 17 that Jesus was *transfigured* with a change that implies he was exalted or glorified and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became white as light.

a voice from the cloud said, "This is my beloved Son,<sup>[a]</sup> with whom I am well pleased; listen to him."<sup>6</sup>

#### **2 Peter 1:16-21 New International Version (NIV)**

*We are told of the same event by Peter in 2 Peter 1..... we did not follow cleverly devised stories when we told you about the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ in power, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. <sup>17</sup> He received honor and glory from God the Father when the voice came to him from the Majestic Glory, saying, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased."<sup>[a]</sup> <sup>18</sup>*

*"We ourselves heard this voice that came from heaven when we were with him .....*

<sup>19</sup> *We also provided with additional arguments for the reality and authenticity of God in Jesus, ie "we also have the prophetic message as something completely reliable, and you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts. <sup>20</sup> ... <sup>21</sup>AND THAT ..... prophecy*

*never had its origin in the human will, but prophets, though humans, spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.*

### **Exodus 24 King James Version (KJV)**

*<sup>12</sup> And in the OT we are provided with an oral history of God revealing himself to the Israelites and instructing them, ... And the LORD said unto Moses, Come up to me on the mountain and stay here, and I will give you the tablets of stone with the law and commandments I have written ...*

*<sup>16</sup> And the glory of the LORD abode upon mount Sinai..*

*<sup>17</sup> And the sight of the glory of the LORD was like devouring fire on the top of the mount in the eyes of the children of Israel.*

*All these readings speak about the confidence and witness that we have to the truth of God.*

#### *Id like to present you with 3 things:*

*1. The truth of God is real. That reality is linked to his promises.*

The Bible is the ultimate source for **truth** - and **God** is faithful to fulfill all His **promises**.

*2. There's a problem- in that we don't always pay attention to his commands and promises and do anything about them*

*3. And ? what's the solution - what can we do about the dilemma.*

#### **The Situation:**

*Gods promises are real*

*Gods promises are to provide us with all that we need, a guide to our lives and to our inherent function – to glorify him*

*Do you accept them as real? And how real are they for you?*

*CS Lewis*

*“Christianity, if false, is of no importance, and if true, of infinite importance. The only thing it cannot be is moderately important”*

*If the truth of God and his promises are real and of infinite importance there is a dilemma or a problem.*

**Problem:**

*Yet we sometimes ignore God's free offer of blessing and go our own ways.*

*This is a paradox because God promises fruit from the sowing of his seed or his word but we don't always pay attention to it or act on it. This is a common human problem.*

We only need to look at the OT examples of how the Israelites ignored God or didn't pay attention to his presence. eg They seemed to forget his relevance despite releasing them from captivity in Egypt and made themselves idols to worship.

Israel exhibited again and again its refusal to obey God.

The writer of Hebrews 3:11 warns his generation and quotes Psalm 95

Wherefore (as the Holy Ghost says, To day if ye will hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion, during the time of testing in the wilderness,

9 where your ancestors tested and tried me, though for forty years they saw what I did.

Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do always err in their heart; and they have not known my ways.

So I swore in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest.).

*This is a problem of our humanness*

*Examples:*

*I found myself dropping into prayer mode as I was driving to work the other day – having lacked that regular habit when on holiday for 2-3 wks.*

*I pray more regularly when I am going to work and I need God more in my life*

*In London, a Romanian Minister who told us, "that to some extent we miss the secret police as we prayed more fervently and had to trust God more when they are around"*

*Pauls comment Romans 7:13-20 "For the good that I wish, I do not do, but the bad that I do not wish is what I practice*

*ie I know in my mind what I want to do but my heart doesn't do what my mind says*

*We know what is right and true but sometimes it is not convenient to have God at the centre of our lives and in charge.*

This paradox we might call a non brainer.

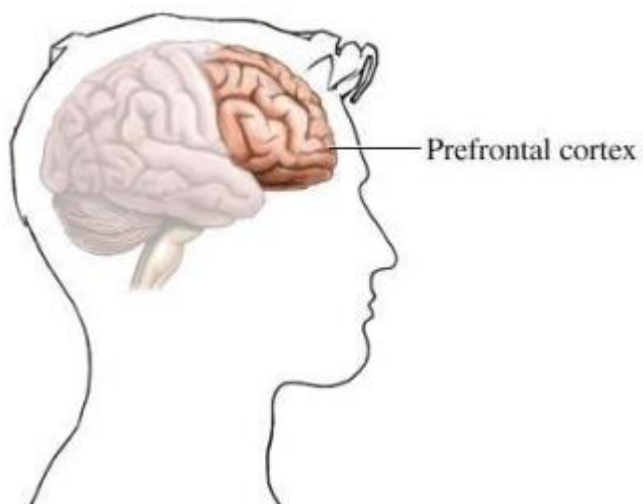
*Compare investing in Kiwisaver. You put in \$1020 and the govt guarantee you another \$540. That's 50% interest pa on your investment. We all belong, or should belong to Kiwisaver if we work for an income.*

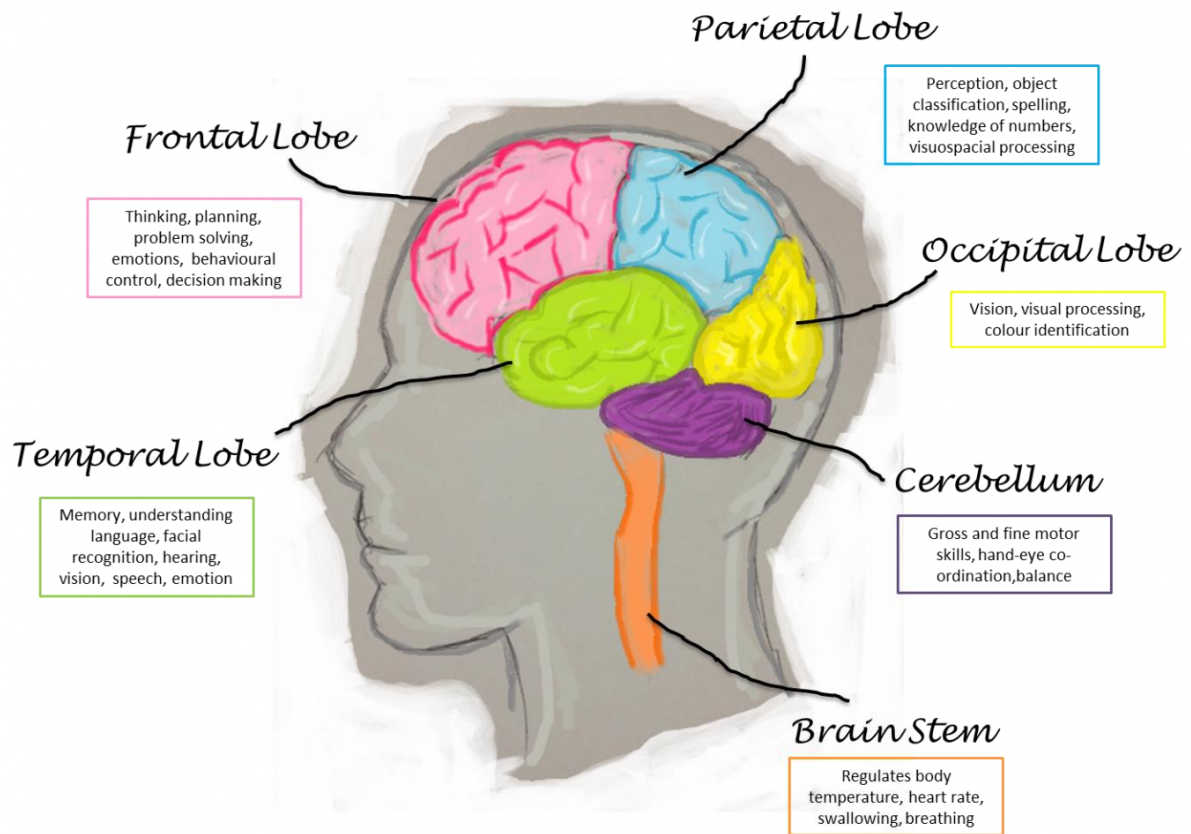
*If Gods Promises are as good as the Govt Kiwisaver, why don't we take a small amount of time to ensure we are continuing to invest.*

So there is this decision making process which seems to go awry.



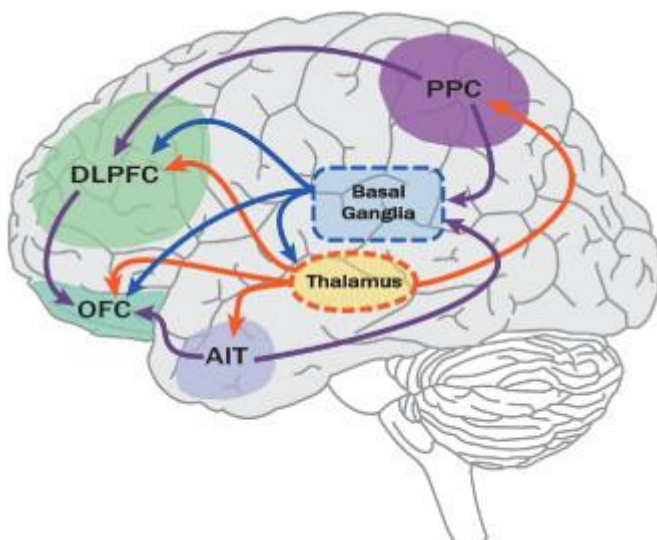
Show a picture of the decision making process of intention.





If we intend to achieve a goal, this requires planning and a coherent series of actions leading to its achievement. Substantial evidence implicates the lateral prefrontal cortex (IPFC) in goal-directed behavior.

Brain Res. 2012 Jan 5; 1428C: 3–12. Published online 2011 May 30.  
doi: [10.1016/j.brainres.2011.05.053](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.brainres.2011.05.053)



1. For those of you who haven't yet decided to make a decision for Christ -The problem is not about intellect

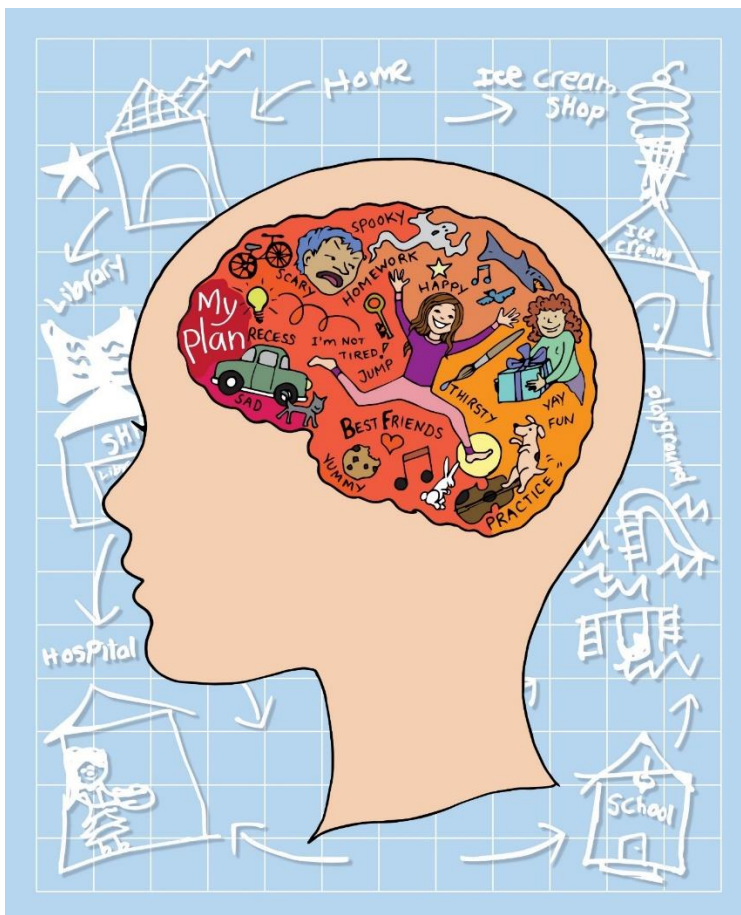
*Its not about intellect and working it out- as Paul says in 1 Corinthians 1:23*  
But we preach Christ crucified, This was a problem for the Jews for Christ was a stumbling block, and a problem for the intellect of the Greeks who regarded Christ as foolishness

*1 Corinthians 2:14* The natural man does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God. For they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned

Rather than intellect its about faith.

*Example of someone who taught me physics at university. He said, I can understand it all intellectually and it all seems right but ...He wasn't prepared to make a decision of faith*

2. For those of us who have decided to make a decision for Christ but we fall short of our intentions or our wishes



The prefrontal cortex is considered crucial to orchestrate thought and action in accordance with intention. *BUT our humanness often seems to prevent this being out into action as other things are crowding out our intentions.*

*Thus, what do we do with the truth of God and Gods word and his promises?*

*What do we do about it (where his word and the revelation of his truth falls on ground that is resistant to growth – where in the different gardens of our lives there are competing issues, where our lives are too cluttered and too busy and don't allow the seed of God or Gods word to be nurtured and we then don't pay attention to the truth of God's word and his promises.*

**What is the solution ?:**

*The three As*

*Availability - we have to make ourselves available - to be in a position to receive God's gifts. We need to open our hearts to God's presence. We need to declutter our mind from those things that preoccupy our thoughts and give God the opportunity to come into our lives. If we are blocking him out, even unconsciously, by the worries of the day, the concerns of tomorrow and perhaps burdens of our past there is no room to see and act on the truth of God and receive these promises, as our minds are preoccupied. Or to make a software analogy – if we are overloaded with too many other programs running in the busy computer of our minds then our spiritual software program of good intentions cant boot.*

*So we have to turn off the busy computer of our minds and all the programs it is running and reboot the computer to allow it to start afresh in the spiritual program.*

*How do we do this?*

*Ask - we have to ask Christ and the Holy Spirit into our lives Rev 3:20 Jesus says "behold I knock and whoever hears my voice and opens the door I will come in and sup with him"*

Thus, when we hear Jesus's voice through his word, through our knowledge of the truth of God . He is telling us he is knocking at MY DOOR, which naturally implies he desires entrance. And Jesus has promised if I will but open the door he will come into me, and sup with me. This is speaking of an intimate relationship.

<http://www.baptistboard.com/threads/behold-i-stand-at-the-door-and-knock-rev-3.84397/page-3>

*Apply - this is probably the easiest as once we enable our souls to be filled with God's love then the love of Jesus will flow within and through us – and we will find that we then love and care for others.*

*If this is not working you might consider the picture of a U tube. ie a tube shaped like a U with an open end on each side. If the U tube is full and we are filling one side with our intentions, concerns and anxieties the same water flows out the other side.*

*If we empty ourselves of that U tube - of those concerns and anxieties, then the U tube and our lives are more able to be filled with Gods Holy spirit who is also more able to flow out the other side through us.*

### 3As

*If you can remember the 3 As (being available, asking and applying )you might want to make this into an app for completion*

### App

computer program designed for a specific task

### *Perseverance Practise*

*You can think of examples of how we look after our physical bodies with food and exercise and rest. This does require some action.*

*We also need to look after our spiritual bodies and persevere and practice being available to open our hearts and minds to God, to ask him to fill us with his HS and trust that will allow practical application of his goodness and receipt of his promises*

*In summary If the truth of God and His promises are true we would be foolish to ignore them.*

*Our humanness however, seems to keep us from practising in our hearts what we believe in our minds.*

*To overcome or at least lessen the effect of our fallen state we need to open ourselves to Gods presence, we need to ask him into our lives every day and we need to nurture our spiritual bodies with regular feeding, by perservering in meeting together and praying, learning God's word by practising it so we can claim his promises.*