

## Our song to sing or to read: Go Make A Difference

**Refrain:** Go make a difference, we can make a difference  
Go make a difference in the world (repeat)

We are the salt of the earth, called to let the people see  
the love of God for you and me.

We are the light of the world, not to be hidden but be seen.  
Go make a difference in the world **(Refrain)**

We are the hands of Christ reaching out to those in need,  
the face of God for all to see.

We are the spirit of hope; we are the voice of peace.

Go make a difference in the world **(Refrain)**  
So let your love shine on, let it shine for all to see.  
Go make a difference in the world.  
And the spirit of Christ will be with us as we go.  
Go make a difference in the world **(Refrain)**



Music and Lyrics by Steve Angrisano and Tom Tomaszek.  
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## A Prayer

Father, thank you that you have brought each of us safely to this place  
and time with you. We gladly surrender our lives to you in worship and  
praise. We take time to remember those who are not with us today.  
For those who are sick we ask for healing; and for those away from us  
we ask for your blessing to be on them. We invite your beautiful Holy  
Spirit to move freely amongst us. Come dwell in each of our hearts.  
Equip us, challenge us, comfort us, teach us. Inspire us as we learn  
more about your majestic ways. Father, as we meet now may we  
behold your beauty and encounter your grace. We ask all this in the  
wonderful name of Jesus. Amen

With thanks to Dan Eaton for preparing today's reflection



# Church in a Bag

## 1 November 2020

Dubbo Uniting Church



## Call to worship

Gentle Shepherd, we come to You as we are, not as we pretend to be.  
The truth is God, that when we lift our heads above our path, we often  
discover ourselves lost in a maze of choices. We often confess that we  
are lost. Were it not for you, we would be lost forever. Because of you  
there is room for us in your Kingdom. Gentle  
Shepherd, King of Love. Seek and find us as we are, not as we pretend.  
Be patient with us and teach us how to hear and obey.  
Gentle Shepherd. King of love. Lead us.  
Amen

## Preparation

Imagine that you come across an ad that stated: "Now you too can own  
a Genuine Coin from The Time of Jesus: The Widow's Mite. It's a minor  
miracle that this coin has survived! Now people of faith can study,  
cherish and protect it for future generations. It's yet another miracle  
that they're so affordable."

Then the ad goes on to state: "While our limited supplies last, you may  
order the 2,000-year-old Widow's Mite for only \$39.95 plus shipping  
and handling. Remember this is the genuine coin mentioned in the  
Holy Bible and it makes a perfect gift for your child, grandchild or  
favourite clergyman". The advertisement makes it sound like you're  
buying the actual coin the widow dropped into the receptacle. Of  
course, you are not. It doesn't exist. It would be harder still to purchase  
the woman's attitude of genuine generosity, which is of greater value  
in today's market.

Today's readings define that to be genuine with God is to be authentic  
and trusting of Jesus' teachings and God's authority in our lives.



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## First Reading: 1 Thessalonians 2:9-13

### Reflection

My first computer was known as a 'Fat Mac'. It was the size of a small esky with only six fonts and styles, simple cut and paste commands, no storage space and a very minuscule WYSIWYG (or 'What You See Is What You Get') screen. Early days with personal computers offered a host of acronyms of the electronic world like RAM, PGM, GNU, UNIX and OS's, Bugs, Bytes, and Bootings.

My favourite was PEBCAK - Problem Exists Between Computer and Keyboard. Many of us today still continue with this operator error - failing to know the operating system and pushing the wrong keys. And when things became complicated and the program wasn't working well, it wasn't uncommon to hear the true boffins refer to that problem as a case of GIGO or 'Garbage In Garbage Out'.

The text today alerts us to bad information leads us onto the wrong outcome. Paul is pleading with the Thessalonians on an issue of GIGO or being careful about heeding the right commands of God and acting accordingly. Paul is warning us to bear witness to the truth in what Paul and Silas have said and done - to focus on their actions more than their words. At the core, Paul's warning is to be wary that what looks good is often just the opposite. In today's parlance we may refer to it as 'Fake News'. Paul and Jesus were warning us of 'Fake Religion'.

## Second Reading: Matthew 23:1-12

### Reflection

Mahatma Gandhi of India is alleged to have said, "If I had ever met someone who was a genuine Christian, I would have become one immediately". From a Hindu leader of passive, social rebellion, this is a stinging judgment of Christians. It challenges us to examine the genuineness of our Christian alignment; of what we speak and how we act. We are asked how authentic, how credible are our demonstrations of Christian life?

One of the better illustrations of 'walking the talk' that I have read is that of a man who arrived in 1953 at the London railroad station to receive the Nobel Peace Prize. As he stepped off the train (a tall man with bushy hair and a big moustache), the cameras clicked, and the city officials approached with hands outstretched to meet him.

He thanked them politely and then abruptly excused himself from the throng and walked through the assembled people to the side of an elderly man who was obviously struggling with two heavy, large suitcases. He picked them up, smiled at this stranger and then carrying the bags, escorted the older man to the nearby bus. He helped him on and waved him off, wishing him a safe journey.

He then returned to the crowd and apologised for keeping them waiting. His name was Albert Schweitzer. As he passed the welcoming committee, it was overheard from one member of that assembled group, "That's the first time I ever saw a sermon walking".

In these verses from the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus is having a rather strong assault on the open hypocrisy of those who lacked the very qualities simply shown by this act of helping unasked. Jesus is calling us to a life in which what we do is consistent with what we say, and what we do is to serve others without regard for who gets the credit. Being humble in service of God's word, means recognising that we are not on earth to see how important we can become, but to see how much difference we can make in the lives of others.

In the words of Albert Schweitzer, "Do something for somebody every day for which you do not get paid".

