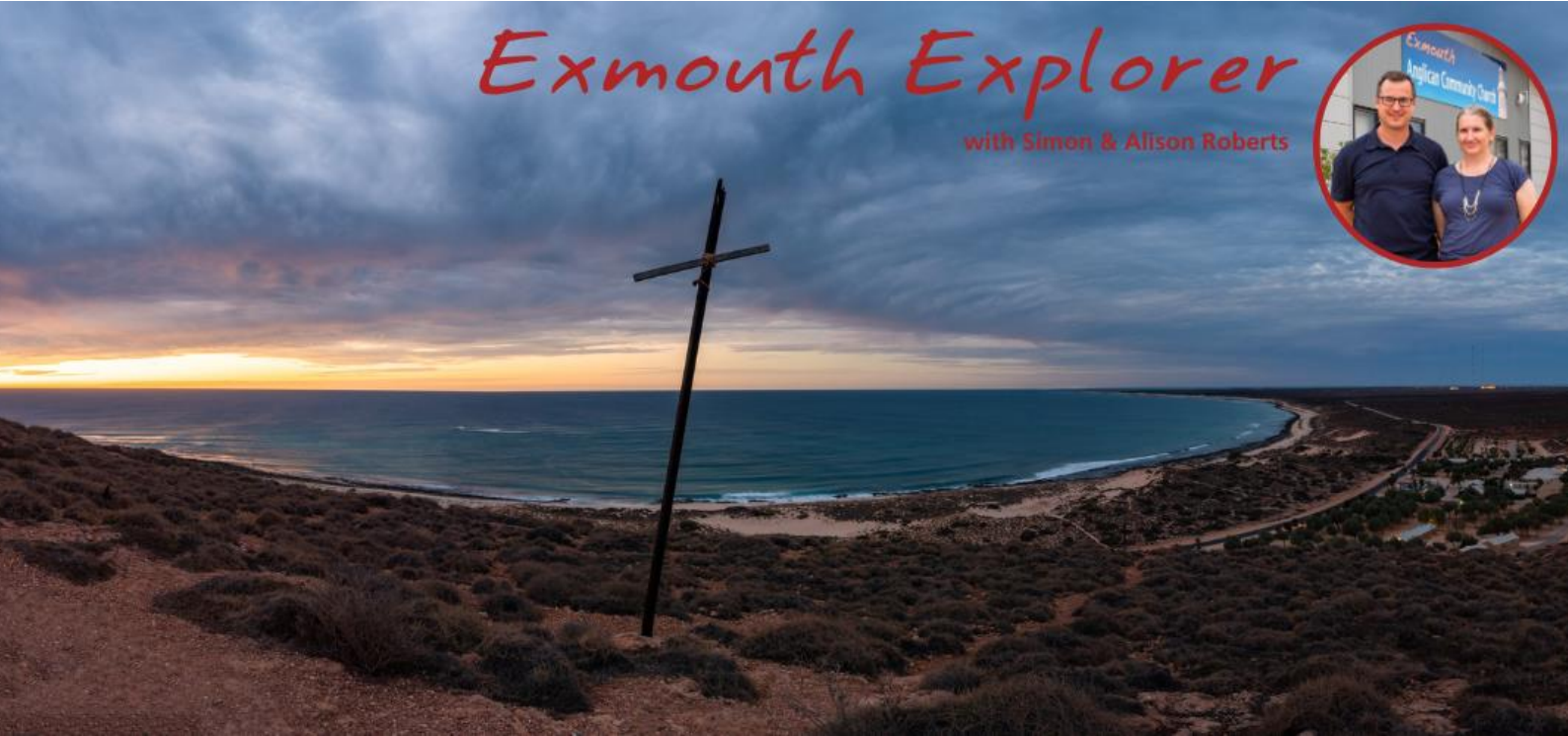


Exmouth Explorer

with Simon & Alison Roberts



March 2024

"As Saul neared Damascus on his journey, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?" "Who are you, Lord?" Saul asked. "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting," he replied. "Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do." Acts 9:3–6

In our sermon series on Acts, we have reached chapter nine, and it's a dramatic, action-packed section. Saul, the man who takes it upon himself to destroy the followers of Jesus, becomes a follower of Jesus! He was utterly convinced the stories about Jesus' resurrection were made up – until he was confronted by the risen Lord Jesus himself. And, perhaps most astonishingly, Jesus chooses this man, later known as Paul, to be "my chosen instrument to proclaim my name to the Gentiles and their kings and to the people of Israel" (9:15). This is the grace and mercy of God at work! Jesus transforms and changes Paul from a violent persecutor into an evangelist, church planter and apostle.

But equally, in the second half of Acts 9, we meet once more the apostle Peter. And, what struck me was just how much Peter is portrayed as doing the things Jesus did, how much he is shown to be like Jesus. Healing a paralytic, raising the dead, mixing with outcasts like Simon the Tanner. What a change Jesus worked in Peter's life. Remember this is the same Peter who used to get it both so right and so wrong. The same Peter who violently cut off the ear of the high priest's servant during the arrest of Jesus. The same Peter who three times denied even knowing Jesus. Thank the Lord he forgives and changes people! It's a great encouragement both personally and for those we know and love who have not yet turned to Christ as Lord and Saviour. Jesus can turn the hardest of hearts and transform them, so they are like him.

So, what's happened over summer?

Our Onslow Carols service was small compared to previous years, but seven of us (five adults and two kids) gathered to sing, pray, and read the Scriptures. The Exmouth Carols is held in the park at the centre of town, mostly run by Exmouth Christian Fellowship, and continues to attract a large crowd. Like many outdoor Carols, it can be hard to get the Gospel message across and



it's difficult to know who is really listening to the words of the carols, but we pray God is at work in the residents of our town. On Christmas Eve we hosted a service followed by dinner and had about five visitors from Exmouth who don't normally attend church.

Over Christmas Rachel, our eldest daughter, visited us and we were able to go camping for a couple of nights. The weather was very mild and we were treated to perfect days in the low 30s and cool nights. And the water was incredibly clear for snorkelling. We are very thankful when we get the opportunity to spend time with family and enjoy God's amazing creation.



The stunning coastline at Osprey where we camped

Church

Church at Onslow has been small but encouraging in January and February. While we only average about five or six people, there is a young couple and their children who attended both times after being out of Onslow for part of 2023. After visiting in January, Simon continued up to Karratha to say hi to Frank & Jo Nicol and their family (and to get the car serviced) before heading to Paraburdoo to catch up with some people there and check on the church building. So, the swag was put to good use, firstly in the Karratha Sunday school rooms and then in the church at Paraburdoo. In the north west you can always find a place to set up your swag and rest for the night, and sometimes be treated to a stunning sunset.



Overnight at Paraburdoo



We have finally decided to change our youth/kids church. So from May, the teenage boys will stay in church for the sermon and then be taken out at the end for a short discussion group. It's taken us a while to reach this decision due to the small number of kids/youth and the fact they all get on so well together. This will leave two girls in our kids' group and will mean extra roles for those currently

involved, with two groups running each week. If Simon takes the boys out, it will mean others will need to jump in to conclude the service.

In preparation for this change, and to cater for the teens, we have started a mid-week youth Bible study group. It involves food, games and most importantly time spent studying the Bible. We've started in the book of Daniel, which has been a great reminder that God is in control even when it doesn't seem like it. It has been really exciting to see the boys grow in their confidence in reading the Bible and praying and their growing understanding and wonder about who God is. The chaplain at the school has also been involved in the group (she attends the other Christian church in town) with the aim of her then inviting kids from the school to join.

Alison has started a daytime women's Bible study group. She is co-leading with Sue (who is the other kids' church leader). So far there have been three to four women each week.

Alison has also started a new job at the Shire library and has had the opportunity to share the Gospel with one of her colleagues.

The last couple of weeks have been busy as ex-tropical cyclone Lincoln threatened to reform and tracked close to Exmouth. Simon was visiting his parents for a few days and was delayed in Perth due to the weather warnings in place, so Alison needed to make most of the preparations (pulling everything that is normally outdoors inside). We are very thankful that a cyclone did not eventuate, though it was unfortunate that we had hardly any rain from the low-pressure system, as Exmouth is extremely dry at the moment.

As we write this we are preparing to head off on a three-week holiday (to Esperance, Margaret River and Dirk Hartog Island). We are very much looking forward to an extended break, but there is a lot to get done before we go in a few days!

Thank you again for your support, your prayers and giving to BCA! We continue to be encouraged and humbled by the support we receive from people all over Australia.

Prayer Points:

- Praise God for the youth Bible study and the boys willingness to be involved.
- Pray for the teens and the girls; that they would still be keen to come to church/kids church once we make these changes. Pray for continued growth in their faith.
- Pray for more families to join us at church, so we can grow our kids and youth ministries.
- Pray for endurance and joy in serving; for the leaders and others, who will need to help to finish the service.
- Pray for more women to be able to join the women's Bible study.
- Give thanks for the faithfulness of Sue (kids' church leader, Bible study leader, treasurer and churchwarden!)

With love

Simon & Alison

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