**OVERVIEW**  
In this me message Keith reflects on the importance of remembering or past

* And then shares four reflections on things that NZ early missionaries and Maori Christians had in common with his own ancestors (we all learned about Christ from others in our past)
* Remembering the past if important in the Bible
  + Our past affects our present
  + Our current actions write the future!

**INTRO**

Someone reminded me it was 175 years since the Treaty was signed. To be honest, I have enough trouble remembering to get milk on the way home sometimes. Then she said. What plans do you have for remembering Waitangi Day this year. To be honest, I didn’t really have any - Waitangi Day is a holiday and not really something many NZers give a lot of thought to.

But I did have a gap on my preaching planner a gap this week. I prayerfully pondered.

**THE PAST INFLUENCES THE PRESENT**

This statement is not totally true – but partly true. Free choice. Young, we think I will never be like my parents. As we get older, we see ourselves getting more and more like them

But doesn’t have to be true. We might have had an abusive past. But with God’s help, we can find freedom and healing.

But past does have a lot of influence on the present.

It might be old history that it is 175 years since the treaty was signed. But that past is hugely influential in where we are today in the present. Ongoing bicultural relationship vs. other countries

And of course the fact there was a treaty was influenced by the revival in England in the 18th century. Clapham sect. That revival ultimately came from the events of the cross 2000 years before.

It is also 200 years since the gospel was first preached in NZ, and that past has helped shape the nation that we live in today.

And then I thought about my own heritage.

* Grandmother
* Bible
* Scots settlers. Presbyterian
* OAC
* Parents.

Reality is that my present has been hugely influenced by these past people , some of whom I never met. The past influences the present.

**THE IMPORTANCE OF REMEMBERING THE PAST IN THE BIBLE**

Bible has a lot of encouragements to remember.

* Remember what God has done in the past
* Remember what I did for your ancestors
* To this in remembrance of me.

Why, because the past influences the present

Grateful for the past. For God’s creation. For his coming to earth. For the cross. For the godly influences he has bought into your life. For the country we live in.

[Pray one sentence prayers thanking God for these things in our past)

**Second profound thought.**

**THE PRESENT INFLUENCES THE FUTURE – BECAUSE THE PRESENT IS THE FUTURE’S PAST!**

Present world we live in.

* Deeply sceptical of the church as an organization
* Does not hold to truth
* Considers Christians to be arrogant,
* Kids are leaving church droves.

So how can I influence the future? How can I leave a heritage for my children and grandchild? What can I do that will leave a heritage for NZ in the future.

We have had two funerals at TBC in last two weeks. Makes you aware of these questions. What heritage am I leaving? Deep search for meaning. We want to make a difference. Be significant.

Started to wonder about what connections there were between NZ history. Treaty, Waitangi, and my heritage. **Is there anything my ancestors and our nation’s key influencers had in common?**

**4 things in common:**

1. **All had a deep conviction that the Bible brings Good news.**

In our NZ past, First sermon Marsden preached. Why would you sail

Thomas Grace.

Why would my grandmother.

In my past, Regarding those who influenced me to faith - why did the OAC guys do what they did?

*Applications: Do we deeply believe that we have good news. That we are loved by God, who wants to be in relationship with us. If we are to influence the next generation we have to passionately believe that the Bible is good news.*

1. **They entered someone else’s world with grace**

In our NZ past,The early missionaries had huge respect for the culture they were entering. They immersed themselves in the customs and language to try to understand. They learnt the language. They sought to understand how Maori thought. For the most part they did not judge and condemn their culture and customs – even though we expect mistakes were made. Maori soon realized that the missionaries had their interests at heart and so drew to trust them.

In my past, In the same way my OAC leaders and Sunday school leaders had to enter my world as a child. They had to respect the way I thought, and relate to me. No one wants to listen to someone that only says we are rotten sinners going to hell – who does not show love.

*If we are to impact our culture today, we have to enter it with grace*. Too often we are seen as judgemental – maybe because we are. We are not called to judge our society. Jesus said he came not to judge but to seek and save the lost. What we have to see is the materialism, and immorality, and consumerism and obsession with pleasure and success are all signs of thirst and hunger. We should not condemn these actions but see them as pointers to a generation that is seeking meaning and answers, but simply looking in the wrong place. We should not condemn these things, but see in them the same self seeking that is in us. They are simply in need of the same grace that we have received.

*Applications: In our mission - We have to learn to enter others worlds with grace, asking questions, learning the language and culture and respecting the common good. Cannot isolate ourselves but enter our community as missionaries.*

1. **They lived well.**

In our NZ past,What I mean by this, is that they in some way acted out their faith. They were by no mean perfect. There were early missionaries with anger issues, sexual issues, greed issues at times. I.e. they were just like us.

But they also were generous with their time. They put their lives on the line in battle. They valued every person. They spoke up about injustice. They were not the same as others.

In my past, I think of my parents. They are not perfect. But they lived and continue to live out something of the love of Christ. I saw how my Dad treated those he managed at work, with grace and generosity. I see my mum, at 80, going into the local decile 1 primary school to help with the kids reading programme. I see them give generously to the poor overseas, and live simply. And they practised servant hood in both work and church.

Going to church was a priority. I saw them model this.

And if we are to impact this generation, before we speak we must have credibility

*Applications: We must extravagantly love the disabled and marginalized in a world that worship success and appearance. We have to live differently from those around us.*

*In the selfie, self obsessed world, we have to live lives that are other focussed.*

*In a world that is obsessed with being connected in a virtual world, we have to obsessed about being connected to an invisible God.*

*In a world that is driven by consumerism, we have to be seen to live simply.*

*In a world of broken families, we have to model healthy marriages and families. (and as I say this I recognize Christian marriages fail, and Christian families are not perfect, and I am in no way wanting to condemn.*

*It seems to me that our lives have to be different from those around us if we are to influence the next generation.*

1. **They talked about Jesus**

4th thing that the influencers of our nation and my own heritage have in common is that they did talk about Jesus.

In our NZ past, As the Scripture says, in the end, faith comes from hearing. The early Maori heard the message from the missionaries and then told each other.

In my past, Sunday school teachers, and OAC, and parent, and books, and sermons all communicated to message of Christ to me. Otherwise how could I have come to faith?

**TOWARD A CONCLUSION**

If we are to be people of influence , if we are to impact the future, I think we can learn from the past. There might be other factors, but surely these four things are what we need today.

Some of you are probably thinking: This is your private history lesson, but is this Biblical? Very good point.

Peter wrote in the NT to the early church, in a society that was growing increasingly hostile to the Christian faith. Christians were being publically ridiculed, marginalized, and persecuted.

Increasingly the same is happening in NZ society. Being a Christian in NZ today is not seen as a positive thing. Our voice is totally ignored. We are ridiculed and marginalized. What does Peter tell the church on how to live?

*11Dear friends, you are like foreigners and strangers in this world. I beg you to avoid the evil things your bodies want to do that fight against your soul. People who do not believe are living all around you and might say that you are doing wrong. Live such good lives that they will see the good things you do and will give glory to God on the day when Christ comes again.* ***1 Peter 2:11- 12***

*Instead, you must worship Christ as Lord of your life. And if someone asks about your Christian hope, always be ready to explain it.* ***16*** *But do this in a gentle and respectful way. Keep your conscience clear. Then if people speak against you, they will be ashamed when they see what a good life you live because you belong to Christ.* ***1 Peter 3:15-16***

* Live lives filled with good works (code for caring for the poor) and differently from those around you.
* Worship Christ as Lord. Make God centre of all you do.
* Know how to explain your faith.
* Do it with gentleness and respect.
* This is what the early church did. Lived radically different lives. And when asked why, they told people about Jesus. They were totally convinced the gospel was good news that they would willingly die. They lived with grace when persecuted and ridiculed. And what they did had huge influence on the future.

**CONCLUSION:**

1. **The past influences the present.**

Need to Understand the past. Nation. Personal heritage. Give thanks to God for those who have gone before.

1. **The present influences the future**

If we are to leave a positive legacy, a Christian heritage

We need convinced of good news of Bible

We need to lead lives that are different from world around us

We need to come alongside others with grace

We need to talk about Jesus

*Are you making a difference for the future? Are you leaving a positive legacy?*