

**Sermon Summary**  
**4<sup>th</sup> in Lent**  
**10<sup>th</sup> March 2013**

- We often only know Joshua from Sunday school and Jericho- after that Christian teaching tends to avoid the text- for understandable reasons.
- Joshua 5:2-12 tells of Israel's distancing itself from the nations around it.
- It forms part of what makes grim reading.
- Israel's inheritance of the Promised land will be accomplished on the back of genocide; the "ban" under which all the indigenous peoples are put to the sword, with very few exceptions.
- Joshua may not even accurately record what happened. Its written several hundred years later by Deuteronomic writers trying to make a point: that keeping separate is the best way to ensure purity and a right relationship with God.
- They wrote after Israel had lost the Promised Land, been exiled and then brought back. It is possible that their recipe is based on fear of history repeating itself.
- Not only that, Joshua has been used by later groups to justify colonialism and land-grabbing, and , if needed, the culling of the indigenous peoples.
- We should not think this is something remote. The use of religious writing to justify such actions is as much a part of Australian history as that of Africa or the Americas.
- It is worth noting that the NT distances itself from these traditions and practices. Jesus' ministry and approach follow the more inclusive practices of Isaiah (see 3<sup>rd</sup> in Lent 2013). Joshua is little mentioned in the NT as a whole
- If that's so- why do we keep Joshua in our scriptures?
- If it is not presumptuous; God, in His wisdom, leaves such texts in our Bible (our authoritative teaching), because we have short memories.
- Joshua is there to remind us of the awful logical consequences of an exclusivist mentality: that people are less important than things
- Joshua is there to tell us what we are not to do and keep this in front of our eyes.

10 March 2013