

So welcome to our **new series Veto...**

The leadership team:

Lyndal, Criag, Macca, Elia, Emma, the Van Drimmelen's and Mark,

felt it was time to get **back to our roots** of what 12two is about.

We spend a lot of time talking about mission and **social justice** and making a difference in the world.

But for a while now I've **sensed that collective identity** has started to get murky.

So we felt we should spend some time **re-instilling and feeding the heart** of 12two.

And we want to do it under the banner of this very interesting word: Veto.



A **veto**, Latin for "I forbid", it is the power of an officer of the state to unilaterally stop an official action.

The word is most commonly used in political circles.

The **United Nations Security Council** has the "**power of veto**" refers to the veto power wielded solely by the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council (China, France, Russia, United Kingdom, and United States), enabling them to prevent the adoption of any "substantive" draft Council resolution, regardless of the level of international support for the draft.

Basically they are **charged with the responsibility** of **oversight** and with that responsibility comes the power of veto.

If something is **happening** which they feel is not **right**, **good** or **best** for a situation they have the power to stop it.

They have Veto.

Said differently if my whole Youth team come up with an idea they think is going to work...

I have the power of Veto to can the idea.

Tribal wars – everyone has tribal wars!

Gang wars – Youthstreet.

they talked about it for a long time.

Decided that it actually should be tribal wars...

And the power of Veto meant that on camp we had gang wars!

A power no one else has!

This series is about **helping you guys recognize** the power of Veto that you have!

- Wanna get wasted tonight man? Nah I'm claiming Veto.
- Should I download that porn? Going to Veto it
- What's the deal with that person over there, what do you know, what's the gossip? Veto
- Things in that significant relationship with that guy or girl you've been dating are getting more and more physical... Veto
- I could just pocket that item in the store, no one would notice... Actually I'm going to Veto that.
- I can't be stuffed talking to anyone tonight after church... Veto...



Basically Sin drags us away from being our Godly best!

Just like sin drags us away from an eternity with God

And to both those things...

The **universal affect** of sin on mankind,

separating us from God.

And the **individual battles** we face each day...

We each have the power to Veto.

And tonight I want to speak about the **power of Veto** we have against **Consumer Church!**


Church can so easily become a **product we consume**.

An **institution we judge** as to whether it's successful in meeting our needs.

A **service we rely** on to **satisfy** our spiritual appetite.

An **organisation** that is always **asking** us for **money**

And if that's what you're thinking, your miles off base!

 I'm in the middle of thinking through a **series** of **blogs** called

Theme Park Theology...

I think on the **Gold Coast** we have a theme park mindset,

Which influences **how we understand**

and **what we expect** from Church.

For instance,

- We want to be **thrilled** not **challenged**.
- We **go** for the **experience** we think we'll have.
- After a while the **novelty can wear off** and we look for the **next best** option.

- It's easy to develop a **favourite option** rather than an option we have an **allegiance** to.

And then we wonder why our Church experience,
and our spiritual lives are so shallow!

But this is not Church.

This is not the bride of Christ.

This is not the gathered people of God.

“Church isn't where you meet. Church isn't a building. Church is what you do. Church is who you are. Church is the human outworking of the person of Jesus Christ. Let's not go to Church, let's be the Church.”

- Bridget Willard

Church is **what** you do,

who you are

and is the **human outworking** of Jesus Christ...

Using the direction Willard points us in,

I want us to **drop the consumer Church** mindset,

And adopt a Christcentric mindset!

In short, we need to **claim Veto** surrounding our **apathy**
when it comes to **connecting** with,

including in,

engaging with

and **building friendships** with people who do come and could come to 12two.

We need to claim Veto on consumer Church!

And the **tool** I have to **help you achieve** this is 4 words...

They are 4 words that **12two was built on**.

They are four words we each need to **reclaim!**

No one stands alone...

No one stands alone...

That is **your** responsibility,

And **my** responsibility...

That

No one stands alone...

So let's get **Christocentric**...

Which means how do we look at life with Jesus in the centre of it!

Let's look at how Jesus does his thing...

Let's look at how Jesus doesn't let anyone stand alone!

Lk 19:1 **Jesus entered Jericho and was passing through.**

Lk 19:2 **A man was there by the name of Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax collector and was wealthy.**

The scene is set...

This guy Jesus.

Up and coming **Rabbi**,

Everyone has **heard** of him.

Crowds were **flocking** to see him.

It's rumored that he'd **done a whole bunch** of really **amazing** things...

From **healing blind**, **deaf** and **dum** people.

To **raising** the dead

To **going head to head** with the religious **law enforcers**.

To **hanging** out with **lepers**...

This guy was the **real deal**.
 He was **hard core**.

And he **walks into the city** of Jericoh.

The same city that years earlier God had told the Israelites,
 now known as the Jewish people,
 to walk around 7 times... go crazy and the walls will fall down.
 The walls did fall down and God and his people took over the city
 And now in a sense God was back.

So this Rabbi, **Jesus walked** into town...

And we're told he was **just passing** through.

He had **no intention** of staying there...

Kind of a **drive by teaching**,
 with some **healings on the side**
 and a **clean getaway**

Now in Jericoh at the **same time** there was this guy by the name of
Zacchaeus.

He was a **Jew's worst enemy**.

See Zacchaeus was a **tax collector**.

A tax collector was **always a Jew** who was **singled out** to be
used on behalf of the Romans

to **collect the taxes** in that region.

Now a **tax collector wasn't paid** but he was **given the freedom** of charging the people **as much tax** as he wished,

As long as at the **end of the month** he had **enough to pay** the Romans,
 they **didn't care** how much money he **extracted**,
 or **what methods** he employed to do so.

So typically a **tax collector** would **not carry any change** around.

So when **Zacchaeus** came to **collect the tax**,

he would **demand they pay** more than the required tax.

The people **would then give him money** and not be able to get any change...

So Zacchaeus **benefited twice**,

and to **enforce** it,

he had at his **disposal the fear** of the Roman army.

“What you can't pay??? I'll ask a soldier to come over here and sort this out.” – no body wanted that.

So Zacchaeus got **richer**,

The Romans stayed **pleased**,

And the Jewish people got **madder**.

And as this **cycle continued** it ensured one thing...

That Zacchaeus was more and more **destined to stand alone!**

To be a Roman was one thing...

Romans were hated by Jews.

But to be a **Jew who had chosen** to work for the **government** that was **severely oppressing** them

And then to **profit from that**...

That meant **everyone knew you** and **everyone despised** you.

Add to that, the fact that Zaccheaus was a **chief tax collector**.

A chief tax collector **meant** that you had **other collectors** under you, from whom **you also profited**.

So he was a **cunning business man**,

able to **manage people well**,

and not **afraid to manipulate** others...

in short...

He was **good at ripping people** off.

And because of this people **wouldn't have trusted** him.

And because of this he would have **felt severely** alone!


And there is a **part in all of us** that says '**serves him right!**'

So we have this stand off

We have a Jewish Rabbi who **stood for releasing** those who were **oppressed**, and **restoring people** to society.

And we have a chief Tax Collector who **unapologetically epitomized** all that the **oppressing government** stood for.

The plot thickens...

 Lk 19:3 He wanted to see who Jesus was, but being a short man he could not, because of the crowd.

Lk 19:4 So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore-fig tree to see him, since Jesus was coming that way.

A couple more things we should note.

1. He was short... he was so short that he needed to climb a tree just to have a hope of seeing.

He **wasn't short like I am** standing next to most of the blokes here...

He was **significantly shorter**,
hence the need to climb a tree.

2. Because he was very short it **probably meant** that he'd **endured some harsh ridicule** in his time.

As **anyone who didn't look average**,
was understood to be **punished by God**.

I'm **struck by this picture** of the **crowd surrounding** this short man,

Who was a **despised** tax collector whom they all knew

Bumping him,

knocking him,

jeering him,

insulting him

Offering nasty dismissive looks.

But Zaccheaus was not to be **deterred**...

Even though **no one wanted to know** him,

Or **even wanted him** to be there

he **had to get an eye full** of this man who he'd **heard all the rumors** about.

Jesus **enters** the **city gates**.

surrounded by the crowds.

And he notices the **commotion** near the tree.

There's something **going on**.

A man **climbing a tree**.

I wonder if Jesus saw the reaction of the crowd to this man.
 Whether he saw their faces, and the looks they were giving him.
 I wonder if Jesus saw how eager this man climbing the tree was.
 I wonder if Jesus saw a tax collector?

Someone whom he really should not like.

Or I wonder...
 did Jesus see a human being.

Did Jesus see a person who was thirsty for love.
 Not a tax collector,
 or a traitor,
 or a target of hate,
 or a representation of a system that opposed his kingdom.
 I think Jesus saw a person who was starved of love.

Because of what happened next.

Lk 19:5 When Jesus reached the spot, he looked up and said to him,
 “Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today.”

I love that!

Jesus sees someone who is starved of love and changes his plans.

No one stands alone!

Jesus sees someone who is starved of love and changes his plans.

“I must stay at your house today.”

I’m not just coming round for lunch.

We’re going to take the time needed to get to know each other.

I’m not just interested in making you feel welcome in my presence, I
want to be friends”, is what Jesus says.

And in front of everyone Jesus invites this guy to be his friend.
 We know this because you didn’t eat with just anyone in those days.
 To eat with someone was a symbol of friendship.

Jesus takes the idea “no one stands (up a tree) alone”
 And stretches it into the realm of friendship

Jesus takes it that extra step that we too often are afraid to because of the cost.

Jesus steps beyond a nice hello.

A friendly connection.

A welcoming handshake

And enters into a friendship

Now this is huge!

We can't rush past this and miss the power of what just happened.

Jesus... a Jewish Rabbi,

An upholder of the law.

A pure and holy man of God

Stepped over the line that you did not cross.

There were people whom you did not associate with.

There were people who you stayed well clear of.

There were people whom if you became friends with, it was a loud statement as to who you aligned yourself with on a social spectrum.

And a tax collector was not a smart move.

Everyone knew it.

- The Pharisees, watching and scoffing, new what Jesus did.
- The crowd would have been stunned at what they heard.
- Zaccheaus himself would have been astounded...

But only Jesus really realized the gravity of what was taking place.



Jesus in those words of invitation enabled God's kingdom to break into this world, in a powerfully stunning way.


But at what cost?

You see it cost Jesus that day.

There is a **cost to these types** of friendships to **kingdom friendships**.

And it's **not just** that they **take time** and **cause us to change** our plans.

Listen to what the price was...

 Lk 19:6 So Zaccheaus came down at once and welcomed Jesus gladly.
Lk 19:7 All the people saw this and began to mutter, "He has gone to be the guest of a 'sinner.' "

Jesus **aligned himself** with the people who **weren't in!**

Jesus **made friends** with people who could **offer him nothing**.

Jesus **took all the abuse** that the **tax collector was getting** and said...

"I'll stand with you. Because I refuse to let people stand alone anymore."

Doing this is costly.

It'll cost you **time that you might spend with friends** whom you already have.

It'll cost you **feeling comfortable**, because you're **required** to go outside of your **comfort zone** to say hi to **strangers**.

It'll cost you **phone calls** or **text** messages or **coffee's** or **meals** or **time** for these **new friends** when they are in **trouble or struggling**

It'll cost you in **all manner of ways**...

And my worry **isn't** that we're **not willing** to pay the price!

My worry is that we're **not even looking at the world** the way God does!

My worry is that **we're not thinking**,

who is alone that I might offer friendship to?

My worry is that we're still coming to Church because of **what we get out of it**, not what **we can contribute** to others.

And because of that,
the potential reach of God's kingdom is limited!

Check out this video...

**SHOW VIDEO OF JESUS LOVES YOU THIS I KNOW:
Jesus Loves the Porn Star**

Do you see how the **potential reach of God's love** is gradually transforming Ron Jeremy...

And it's happening through the **willingness of Craig Gross**...
Who has **recognized his responsibility** to God and to Ron,

To make sure he **isn't standing alone**.

To make sure he is **aware of God's love**.

Which he does through his **words and his friendship!**

I know many of you,
From **time to time**,
If not more **regularly** than that...
Feel **alone!**

But being the Church...
Which we are...
Means we all have an **equal role to play** in ensuring that no one stands alone.

Because if we **all commit** to this...
Then no one misses out, but everyone is drawn in to the outplaying of God's kingdom!

And the church then does **become a refuge** for those who are otherwise alone!

Listen to what happened to Zacchaeus **after he is invited** into Christ's community.

Lk 19:8 But Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, “Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount.”

It’s remarkable because he was never told to do that.

Jesus invited himself round for lunch...

There was **no sermon**.

No **devotion** before hand.

No **Bible study** on the way.

Just an **invitation to be friends**...

The **change** that took place **was the result** of **someone being valued** and loved by Jesus, which he discovered when he was invited into community!

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Jesus offered Zacchaeus love...

And Zacchaeus **accepted that love** and was **transformed**.

And **Jesus ends the public** interaction with **these words**...

Lk 19:9 “Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham.

Interesting what **Jesus understands** salvation to be isn’t it...

It’s **more than what** we reduce it to...

a **ticket to heaven**.

Salvation for Jesus was **becoming a part** of a **community**.

Part of Jesus’ community!

because this man, too, is a son of Abraham.

That phrase '**son of abraham**' was a common phrase used to describe someone who was in.

Someone who was a fully fledged follower of God.

Jesus was saying 'this man too, is a **child of God**.'

This man too, is **worth God's** love.

This man too, has **every right to belong** to this **thing that God** is doing.

This man too is as **equal as any** of us.

And so Jesus **values this man**,

Shows him that he's worth something

And **offers him friendship**.

That's what salvation from Jesus perspective included, being part of Jesus' kingdom now, today, and enjoying friendship with God that lasts forever, even past death.

I think we underestimate, what Jesus counted on.

We underestimate the **importance of making friends** with people who come here **searching** for God

But Jesus counts on the fact that we will.

We underestimate **welcoming people unconditionally** and **opening** our lives up to them,

But Jesus counts on the fact that we will.

We underestimate **paying the cost for friendship**

But the **continuance** of Jesus' kingdom, **breaking** into this world, **counts on the fact** that we will,

