

Welcome

Welcome everyone to the worship of Tyndale Baptist Church. Churches are beginning to open for worship and we are hoping to do so before long, but it's likely that aspects of these recorded services will continue as well. Clearly gathering in a building is going to be very different to how it used to be, with restrictions on singing and interactions of all sorts and social distancing and so on.

Much in contemporary worship revolves around atmosphere and elements of entertainment have become prominent in recent years – and much of that is going to be very challenging in the ensuing period. But the heart of worship lies in the mysterious encounter between God, each person, and each other, and the direction of worship is both inward, from God to us, and outward, from us to God-in-the-world.. And that's not entertainment, and not dependent on atmosphere – really, it's holiness. The 1st song, sung by a group from Tyndale

CG48 'Santo, santo, santo'

A Tyndale virtual singing group

Call to Worship

Holy, holy, holy – the long-established, deep-seated cry of all who worship at the realisation of God's greatness and great love – God far beyond *and* God as near as our next breath – because of Christ, because of God's own spirit. Holy, holy, holy – you are holy, Lord. we come at your call and in Christ's name we worship you.

['Who can know'](#)

Martyn Layzell

Opening Prayer

Wonder rises in our hearts, Lord, as we acknowledge once more your very great power and mysterious greatness, *and* your very great love and mysterious grace – that you have made us and all the world; that you are saving us and reconciling all things in Christ; that your Holy Spirit enlivens and enables and empowers everything that lives and moves and has its being – from the smallest particle to the vastest star, the tiniest organism to the largest living thing

And somewhere in the middle of it all – of everything that *is* – we are to be found, and we contemplate the greatest mystery of all, that you have made us to be the very highest of all your creatures and the very objects of your endless love and saving power –and...that we have been made in your image – holy, holy, holy – our hearts adore you

Lord, forgive us, for we have marred your image in us by our selfishness, our neglect of what is good; our easy turn to what makes for death and destruction; the casual way in which we allow injustice and corruption to flourish; the thoughtless way in which we allow your creation to be spoiled and polluted and abused –

Lord, please forgive us and restore us– we wait on your word

Scripture says, *If we confess our sins, he who is faithful and just will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness*

Thanks be to God for his unfailing love. So, Lord, with thankful hearts we continue to worship, so that we might see more of you and discover more of what it means to carry your image in our lives and reflect your image in the service we offer in the world.

Lord help us, in Jesus' name.

['Shelter Me'](#)

Rev Michael Joncas,
(played and sung by 'Spiritu')

Lord's Prayer:

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen

Readings

[Genesis 1:26-31](#)

[Colossians 1:15-23](#)

The Grace is said:

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all, evermore, Amen.

'Morning has broken'

Address - The new world VI - restoring the image

Lord, we give you this time; may what is spoken ring with truth, may what is heard and understood be touched by your spirit and may what is decided lead us all on towards your kingdom, for Christ's sake, amen.

It transpires that the man who first proposed the idea and then campaigned to get a statue to Edward Colston erected in the centre of Bristol was a member of Tyndale – James Arrowsmith – you can read about him in the chapter by David Roberts in the Tyndale history 'Open to God, open for all' – and in a forthcoming piece in the Link by John Briggs.

He was a benevolent employer who treated his workers fairly and provided all manner of amenities for them, and played a large part in establishing the GCC Club at Ashley Down.

But he was a man of his time, and he was part of a movement in the late 19th Cy to portray the image of Bristol as a prosperous city with a distinguished history –

It seems that Edward Colston, out of a list of possibles, was chosen to represent the image – *one of the most virtuous & wise sons of their city*, the plaque on his recently toppled statue proclaimed.

Never mind his part in the slave trade; never mind the questionable extent of his philanthropy – not as much as some others – he was chosen, and thus a statue helped create the image.

The story of how Arrowsmith struggled to raise the funds is fascinating – so, too, is the story of Colston Day, which Bristolians celebrated for decades & the Colston buns, enjoyed by generations of boys at Colston foundation schools – all of which helped reinforce the image – virtuous and wise –

So many images like that have come to our attention in recent days – Cecil Rhodes, at Oriel College Oxford; Winston Churchill's memorial statue in Parliament square; Statues in many US states to leading figures in the Confederacy – slave-owning states in the American Civil War

Many (most) men. Some replaced by women. A statue in Alabama to a Confederate officer was replaced by one to **Helen Keller** the blind/deaf campaigner in 2009.

After the George Floyd murder many such statues were targeted. The Black Lives Matter campaign focussed the pain and frustration felt by black people in the US onto attacks on the *image* such statues portrayed

Of course it's complex, all this; mob rule; law-breaking; decades-long debates about removing statues that don't get anywhere; offence caused and taken.

But Donald Trump's attack highlights the point – "These monuments memorialize the history we all share", he said recently

The point is, not all share the history. Statues tell *one* story, they're history frozen in a moment of time, they represent something, but *don't* represent something else –

Some Bristol folk liked the image that the Colston statue projected – those that noticed (I confess I hardly gave it a glance)

But other Bristol folk, who felt excluded from the prosperity, whose cultural memory included slavery, felt less & less comfortable with the image.

Perhaps it's always like that with images – human images, anyway. Lots of churches contain statues of Jesus on the cross – it's an essential part of Christian devotion, but it's a moment frozen in time; it doesn't tell the whole story; it doesn't portray the resurrection, the coming of the Holy Spirit,

There are lots of statues or portraits of Jesus that make him look like a white European – often with a flowing beard and piercing blue eyes – but the image says more about the where and when of the part of Christianity that gave rise to those statues than about the reality –

Whatever else Jesus was, he was a 1st century Palestinian man; maybe bearded, who knows, but probably darker of complexion and shorter in height than the statues portray –

The image tells one story, but doesn't tell the whole story; tells of the Jesus who is venerated in white, western churches, but doesn't say much about a faith that was born and spread among poor Middle Eastern communities

Sometimes new images try to redress the balance – Jesus as a black African, or a South American peasant, or a labourer from Haiti – images that reflect the culture in which they're made

And if, sometimes, such images offend our sensibilities, it's only akin to the offence caused by the church's traditional images of Jesus. As one black commentator said recently, "If your religion requires Jesus to be a blonde haired blue eyed Jesus, then your religion is not Christianity, but white supremacy."

It is, of course, central to the Christian faith that Jesus is an image – as it says in Colossians - He is the image of the invisible God. How about that – an *image* at the centre of our faith – Jesus, an image of God.

But think, for a moment, of who that Jesus is; *the firstborn of all creation; in him all things were created, before all things, the head of the body, the church; the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, through him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things..by making peace through the blood of his cross.*

That's the Jesus who is an image – not a statue, not even just a Palestinian man, much less a blonde haired blue eyed European, Rather, the firstborn of all creation who died on a cross for us all - that's the image of God..

We are reflecting in these weeks, on what might be part of the new world, part of the 'new normal' after all this, as we emerge into a different changed world.

I wonder if the Colston statue toppling and the continued turmoil over other statues might not be a sign of the times as much as anything. Of course this is first and foremost about the death of George Floyd and Black Lives Matter and rightly so, but it is, I think, also about something else – frustration at a world in which it was OK to set up images that bore little relation to what actually happened, that told *one* very lop-sided story -

A story about victory and domination and knowing your place. A story about men more than women, about white more than black, about prosperity for some and oppression, racism and poverty for others –

A story, to our shame, in which often the Christian church was centre-stage.

This virus has led to frustration there's no doubt; and it's a time in which much that has gone before has been swept away – *is* being swept away.

And after? In the new, emerging world? Maybe there shouldn't be any place in it for Colston-like images, all lop-sided with the unfairness and injustice of slave-made history. Maybe a new world calls for new images – but it's more than just a few replacement statues

Perhaps it starts with a new image of Jesus, in our hearts and minds – not the comfy, European Jesus whose followers turned a blind eye to the injustices and poverties of the past,

But a Jesus who is, truly, the image of God; not frozen in a moment of time, but living, alive, and always moving by his spirit to call us out of the injustices of the past toward the freedoms and justice of the Kingdom.

Because the irony of all this is that *we*, as it says in Genesis, were made in God's image. Human beings were made to be like God, fruitful in the earth, dominant over all living things, and good – like all God made – good..

That's what it means to be in the image of God – good – just, peace-making, community-building, meek and merciful, ready to serve – good..

The Christian understanding is that that image was spoiled by a thousand choices to live for ourselves and do what is evil and, you could say, settle for lop-sided stories of history – ours, as much as the world's

Until Christ came; in whom the image of God could truly be seen for what it was supposed to be –

And who died on the cross to mark the end of the old world and rose again to herald the beginning of the new –

a world in which the image of God in human beings would be restored by acts of faith, service and peace-making, mercy and forgiveness and much else – please God such things will mark the new world

And we will see the image of God restored (not just a few new statues to replace the old ones, though maybe that would help); - restored in *us* by faith in Christ –

a just world, a peaceful world, a *good* world won't need statues that promote *some* people's idea of virtue and wisdom;

because in that world virtue and wisdom will be seen like never before in folk who, by faith in Christ, display the image of God.

['We cannot measure how you heal'](#)

John Bell – sung by Brian Doerkson

Prayers

We pray for all who find themselves living in fear – not just of what this coronavirus might bring, but of endemic racism – in the US, here, elsewhere, of state oppression – in Hong Kong, Russia, elsewhere
May the reality of this Christian truth reach them: *perfect love casts out fear*..we pause in quiet
Lord **Hear our prayer**

We pray for all who find themselves struggling with isolation, because of lockdown conditions, or because of physical characteristics or prejudice
May the reality of this Christian truth touch them - *The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it* – we pause in quiet
Lord **Hear our prayer**

We pray for those we know and love from whom we are separated by distance -
May the reality of this Christian truth comfort them - *This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you* – we pause in quiet
Lord **Hear our prayer**

We pray for ourselves as we begin to adjust to changes in a changed world
May the reality of this Christian truth speak to us all - *For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.* – we pause in quiet
Lord **Hear our prayer**

Offering

Every aspect of the world that emerges after this lockdown will be a challenge, not least economically; lots of folk will find that incomes and livelihoods are reduced or taken away altogether. As we give we hold such folk in mind, recognising that every act of generosity adds to the spirit of generosity in the new world

['Great is thy faithfulness'](#)

sung by Women of Faith

Blessing

So may the blessing of God almighty, Father Son and Holy Spirit, be with us and remain with us, now and always. Amen.

['The Irish Blessing'](#)

Thank you all for being a part of this service. Thanks once again to Ians Holyer and Waddington, to Rachel Molyneux and to those who took part in this weeks' virtual singing group, to John Briggs.

I wish you well again, and ask you to continue thinking of and praying for the officers and Deacons as they begin to negotiate the challenging territory that lies around the opening up of the building at an appropriate time.

Meanwhile, please make contact if you would like to talk

A coffee 'together through apart' time follows at 11.30