

Sunday 30th August

Song [You are my hiding place](#)

Welcome & Call to worship

Let me welcome you to Tyndale Baptist weekly on line service. It's a very gloomy day out as I record this, but I hope that its brighter when and where you are listening. We gather in different times and spaces and yet we are one. Like the disciples huddled in their closed room, waiting, waiting, we too wait for the Spirit of God to fill us again as we hear God's words for us today. The God who always says, 'Don't be afraid for I have redeemed you, I have called you by name, you are mine.'

Song [See what a morning](#)

Opening Prayer

God our maker, we pause in awe of this life you have created in all of its wonder and intricacy. You know us intimately and with you nothing is hidden. You call us to experience your resurrection life filled with hope and peace. You invite us to put our trust in you and time and again we do that, through all the changing scenes of life, in trouble and in joy.

Today we thank you for making yourself known to us through Jesus Christ. We turn to you again in this time of worship and offer you both our thanks and our profound gratitude for your loving presence with us here, and in every moment we look for you. You celebrate our triumphs and hold us in our despair and challenge us in our prejudices and failures. So you help us to grow in character and spirit and you give us hope for this day and beyond.

We thank you again for your word of life and death and resurrection. For the ways we learn about the sharing of life with others, for all we learn about caring and reaching out to others, for all we learn about love for self and others through Jesus.

We thank you for the knowledge that you bring new life and hope in even the most challenging places.

As we turn again to you, show us more about how to travel together, about your hope and peace, your faithfulness and your understanding of eternity. Draw near to us, and fill us with your spirit again. Teach us new things that we've never thought about you, just as you taught your disciples new words and attitudes when you walked the road with them. Jesus, teach us to live for your praise and glory. Saviour, Redeemer, Friend, Teacher, our all in all.

Lord have mercy on us.

Song BPW 454 Kyrie Eleison sung by Tyndale Group

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

Reading [Mark 16: 1-8](#)

Song [Be still my soul](#)

Reading [John 20: 1-18](#)

Song [O God you search me and you know me](#)

Sermon [Evolve or Repeat?](#)

Before ever we reach resurrection we have first to recognise the Cross and the Tomb. Well we spend a lot of energy understanding the Cross, quite rightly. But my mind has been drawn more recently to the Tomb. What happens in the Tomb? The neglected Tomb. The in-between time.

It's like a hiding place. No one willingly looks to be in there locked away, often times we think of them as scary, spooky places. Amongst the natural processes happening there is also a silence. A stopping. A stillness. The tomb is a holding place. It's dead space, as if all the usual activities have ended, but, in the silence something is stirring. In the silence, new life is stirring.

It's a little like the movement of the Chrysalis towards the butterfly. Becoming nothing, its transformation takes place in the darkness of the Cocoon. It has a whole process of becoming to go through:

It begins as an egg, laid on a leaf that is the perfect food for the next stage of life. Out of the egg comes a little wiggly, furry thing with lots of legs – not a centipede, a caterpillar -- who spends its days chomping and eating on the leaf on which it was born. Its only job is to eat and grow, grow and eat. And that is what it does.

Then, when the caterpillar feels an inner push – it just knows when it is the right time – then it will spin a cocoon or a chrysalis around itself. The word chrysalis comes from the Greek word for gold. Something precious is happening.

This is an amazing stage of a caterpillar's life. From the outside, it looks as if the caterpillar is curled up inside taking a nice siesta, but inside is where all of the action is.

Within the chrysalis the caterpillar does not CHANGE INTO a butterfly, rather it is undergoing a metamorphosis. It doesn't go into the cocoon and sprout little wings and shorten its body and suck in its multitude of legs.

No, inside the cocoon, the caterpillar is reduced to a puddle of goo, a glob of DNA, and it is out of the puddle of goo that the butterfly arises. The tissue, limbs and organs of a caterpillar dissolve and then reform. Finally, when the caterpillar has done all of its dissolving and reforming inside the safety and darkness of the cocoon, an adult butterfly emerges.

When the butterfly first emerges from the chrysalis, both of the wings are soft and folded against its body. This is because the butterfly had to fit all its new parts inside a tiny space. After a brief rest from the chore of coming out of the chrysalis, the butterfly pumps blood into the wings in order to get them working and flapping – only then it gets to fly.

Within the tomb, Jesus is changed and when he emerges he is changed. That's what he says to Mary when she tries to hold him. Almost like he is saying, you must let go in order to find me. Let go. Don't hold onto the way you used to know me. Things are different now. And Mary is changed too, as she is reunited with the one who already transformed her life once. Now another transformation is coming in the call to witness to Jesus new life.

As Aslan says to the children standing on the edge of Aslan's country being told they are too old to return to Narnia again, 'You must learn to know me in your own land,' Learn to know me in a new way. Mary is invited to know Jesus in a new way and in that transformation she is given the important task of explaining it all to the other disciples and followers, hidden in the city, afraid to go out, huddled behind closed doors, nursing their heavy hearts.

Things have changed for us too. I'm sure the reason I'm drawn to the tomb is because it feels like these last few months are somewhat akin to the experience of the Tomb. Our old life with all its freedoms has ended. In many ways, we've been shut away from each other, from family, from the activities we love. So many have been left fearful of what the future holds and uncertain of what it all means.

And Tyndale's life, so many of the things we did each week, each month, even things like the Spring Supper, haven't happened. But our belonging isn't reliant on the things we do rather than who we are. Seekers of the living God gathered together by God on Whiteladies Road. So we have found ways to stay in touch, ways to encourage and help one another, ways to use each other's gifts, however insignificant it may have seemed to you, that phone call that message/card, that attendance at the coffee shop with a smile. Feels a little like the buildings have been closed up like a tomb! And in the silence other signs of life have stirred.

Change is a part of what happens in the tomb. That's why the tomb is such an important part of our imagery for baptism. That disappearing under the water, the full immersion, for a moment the person is gone from sight to rise again to new life in Christ.

You'll find a challenge to see anywhere in the bible where a person has an encounter with God and stays the same.

People like Sarah and Hannah and Elizabeth and Mary give birth to children.

People like Moses and Abraham and Jonah went on a journey.

People like David and Isaiah and Paul started writing love songs.

People like Jeremiah and Matthew and Zacchaeus got rid of their money and changed their lifestyle.

People like Peter and Andrew and James and John changed their jobs. Peter also had his name changed.

And then there were others, a whole host of people, like cripples and blind folk and lepers whose names we'll never know who changed from begging to dancing, from sitting on the outside to being the centre of attention, restored to their lives. Why? Because the changeless love of God had its effect on them. And we, as we meet that love will never remain the same, but 'change from glory into glory till in heaven we take our place', as the old hymn goes. Because after the tomb resurrection happens!

People have begun to emerge from lockdown. Things are beginning to feel more normal. A new kind of normal I suppose. Of course, different people respond in different ways to it. Some cautious and fearful, others impatient and ready to embrace their freedom again. All of them hungry for the things they need. Hungry for things they have missed that contribute to a sense of wellbeing, a sense of shalom that speaks to the deep dis-ease of anger, frustration, selfishness, faithlessness, and fundamentally, we know human beings are social creatures. We are not made to be alone. We need friendship, communication, outlets for creativity, touch, exercise and so much more.

Mary's encounter with Jesus moves her from response to participation in resurrection herself. As she runs to the other followers and invites them to believe that God has done something impossible. As she invites them to leave their fear and hurt because Jesus new life is also new life for her and for them. I was very struck by the difference between the two resurrection stories with Marks version ending quite abruptly with terror and amazement, and John, well John, doesn't end until the disciples have emerged from their hiding place and made their way to the beach and set to repeating the things they did on the past, a kind of comfort I suppose, until Jesus turns up and fills their nets and feeds them and forgives Peter. Transforms them. Fishing will never be enough for them again. More is asked. They cannot go back.

And many are asking the same questions about after lockdown and what the Church should look like. Are we just traumatised and desperate to go back to the way things were? Of course, there is some of this to be aware of and work out. But can we also see the possibilities, will what we had before ever be enough? Was it enough to begin with? If the Church has been through its period of gestation, what next?

Like the disciples, we are called to evolve, to move from our nets to fish in different ways. Evolve or repeat was the challenge. To keep on repeating what has always been done. Or to see new life emerge and develop as we seek new ways to witness to the life of God, as we seek to build the kingdom.

As people emerge from lockdown, yes, we are seeing a hunger for community, for experiences of joy, of connecting with others. I suspect too that there will be a search for the meaning of it all. A time of grieving our losses. A time to mourn for the things we took for granted, freedom of movement, security, the shrinking of our worlds. There will be the desire to celebrate again things like birthdays, anniversaries, weddings. When exactly this will be, we don't yet know.

And these are all things which the Church has resources to help with, to encourage and be part of. We know what gives meaning to life. Faith, love, hope, these are the things which are ours to share and so much more. They are things unchanged by time. But we also know that people need connection, to know they belong. People need challenge to change their prejudices and to embrace life-giving ways in relationships. God's faithfulness, generosity, love of the other, willingness to go the extra mile, to simplify life. And more than anything people need to rediscover that this, their present moment, is connected to eternity.

Who will we tell, how will we share, where will it take us? What do we still need to do to prepare ourselves for it? And who wants to travel together through this as we evolve taking with us only the things which help us to fulfil our calling to be witnesses to new life, resurrection life. These are the questions to occupy the hearts and minds of followers of Jesus in these days.

Good news is, we don't need to answer all of that ourselves. Mary was told who to go tell. In fact, in spite of all their fears and failings, the disciples found that they were enough to start a revolution. One new life at a time. And if I have heard God say anything through this, it's that we, Tyndale may feel like we've been locked away, entombed, but after that resurrection happens, and we are enough to fulfil the task! It hasn't stopped with previous generations, who also faced times of world turmoil in their lifetimes. We are enough for this moment. We are what God needs to speak words of life.

So when we emerge will we be the same? Will we evolve into new ways because our needs are different, or our ways of connecting with others require a different approach? What things of value will we repeat and what will we have left behind? What speaks of Jesus most for us today?

As we re-emerge there will be a hunger and we must be ready to feed souls. Ready to fly with the message of resurrection. We are waiting for resurrection today. Waiting like followers of Jesus have always done for the moment when we see him and know what being close to God really means – then we can say, like others before us, I've seen the Lord. And we are, together, enough to be witnesses to it. As old Bilbo

Baggins once said as he looked to the future, 'I think I'm ready for a new adventure!' The adventure of resurrection life.

Song [On the darkest day of all](#)

Intercessions

God our maker, God of new life and new beginnings, we thank you that with you, all things are possible, even death did not defeat you. You rose again. You faced our deepest fears and in spite of the scars reach out to us, and say, 'Do not be afraid.' My peace I leave you. Words can't say how much we need to hear of your peace and your love, but more than that to know it deep within us. We search for so many ways to fill our lives and defeat the emptiness. But locked doors are no barrier to you. Stones cannot keep you from us.

We bring before you, those you call us to serve.

The broken, the grieving, the victims of crime, the lonely, the addicted, and those you have placed on our hearts specifically today...

We bring before you, those we are called to love: our families, our neighbours, the poor, the stranger, the prisoner, the homeless, and those whom God brings to our minds today...

We bring before you, those you call us to walk alongside: those who are grieving, those who are scared, those who are waiting, those who feel hopeless, those who are celebrating, those who need to know they are not alone, those who are working in schools, care homes and, hospitals, Doctors surgeries and shops, those who are unsure of their future employment, university course, housing...

We remember before you those you call us to challenge, who hold power over others' lives and have responsibility for our communities life and wellbeing, whose decisions from afar affect the poorest and most vulnerable and can be life affirming or life destroying. We pray for compassion and wisdom and words with meaning.

May your kingdom come through our prayers and actions this week, as we wait for a vaccine breakthrough, and as we anticipate opening for worship next Sunday. We pray for the officers and deacons as they try to make the right decisions and communicate with the right words. Grant them your wisdom.

So, with all Christ's people around the world, we embrace your resurrection life. You are risen and rise again when in any community:

goodness prevails over wrongdoing
unhealthy living conditions are transformed
faithlessness is transfigured into faithfulness
fear is overcome by hope and love
poor people hear good news and captives are released
people blinded by prejudice and hatred recover loving sight
and oppressed people are given their freedom.

Come Lord Jesus, come. For we pray in your name, our Saviour, Jesus Christ, Amen

Offering and Prayer

We pause to make our offering. In these moments we are challenged to respond to God's calling to build the kingdom for these days and times through our common Tyndale Purse, as well as through the gifts of our lives. We pause to recall God's generosity and grace towards us...

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.*

Song Facing a task unfinished

Blessing

The blessing of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit be with you this day and remain with you always.