

Sunday 20th September

Welcome to worship with Tyndale Baptist Church, whether gathered here in the sanctuary or watching on-line, you are welcome and we are one in Jesus Christ, called together to witness to God's presence in the world.

A small reminder that we cannot stand or sing as we would usually have done, although you may like to gently murmur behind your mask. Let the words, music and the thoughts of our hearts and minds lead each of us to the living God to receive mercy and grace enough for this day and beyond. So we offer our spiritual worship to God who is with us in every moment of our lives.

Music [Creator God you are there](#)

Call to Worship

One thing I have asked of the Lord,
this is what I seek:
that I may dwell in the house of the Lord
all the days of my life;
to behold the beauty of the Lord
and to seek Him in His temple.

Call: Who is it that you seek?

Response: We seek the Lord our God.

Call: Do you seek Him with all your heart?

Response: Amen. Lord, have mercy.

Call: Do you seek Him with all your soul?

Response: Amen. Lord, have mercy.

Call: Do you seek Him with all your mind?

Response: Amen. Lord, have mercy.

Call: Do you seek Him with all your strength?

Response: Amen. Christ, have mercy.

Hymn [Praise to the Lord the almighty](#)

Opening Prayer

O God our maker, we thank you for this day you have breathed into life. It is another gift from your generous hands. Thanks for being here with us. Thanks for being interested in our lives. Even though we know that you hold the whole world in your hands, you care for us. You are loving. You are all that's good in this world. You're like the best parent ever and always patient with us, even though we get it wrong so often. We're sorry that many times we fail to reflect you in us. So thanks for giving us a new start and for never letting your love run out when so often ours does. Thanks for sending Jesus to be our Saviour and friend. We can't imagine what that cost you, nor how much you suffered on behalf of the world you made. We only know our own pains and those are hard enough for us. So thanks again for trying to make it easier for us to know you and understand you, and especially for giving so much for us. We're too small to really grasp it. But we'll try to do our best today to make the things we say and do speak of all that you are, so others will really see you and not be put off by us.

We thank you for your promises, especially of being with us through each moment of our lives, no matter where we go, or who we're with. We need that for these days when our world seems to have shrunk so small and into such and odd shape. Thank you that you see us as we really are and hold our past, our present and our future in your loving hands.

We thank you for our time together as a small part of your family. Fill us up again today so we aren't conformed to this world but transformed and renewed. For Jesus sake, Amen

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

Song Alleluia Raise the gospel

Tyndale Singers

Declaration of faith

To whom shall we go?
You have the words of eternal life,
and we have believed and have come to know
that You are the Holy One of God.
Praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ,
King of endless glory.

Hymn [It is well with my soul](#)

Reading [Romans 12: 1-21](#)

Sermon Surrounded by hope

Why are you in despair, my soul? Why are you disturbed within me? Hope in God! For I shall still praise him: my Saviour, my helper, and my God. (Ps. 43:5, WEB)

This I recall to my mind and therefore have I hope. It is because of Yahweh's loving kindnesses that we are not consumed, because his compassion doesn't fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. Yahweh is my portion, says my soul; therefore will I hope in him. (Lam. 3:21-24, WEB)

Rejoice in Hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer. (Rom 12 12)

We continue our series on hope through the book of Romans mostly. Hope that is unseen. Hope that is what keeps us going. Hope is necessary to overcome trials and to see beyond present difficulties. Hope is one of the gifts of God to us and when we put our hope in Jesus we find strength of enough for each day. Hope is a good thing to be exploring. It's not like it's an easy thing and to grasp it enough to explain that hope to others, to make it real for others, is underlying all that Paul is trying to say, in sometimes poetic, other times dense way.

And I think this, Chapter 12, must be one of the most challenging chapters in the whole bible. Chapter 11 ends with the overwhelming generosity of God and the deep wisdom of God who mysteriously manages to take all the experiences of our lives and turn them into opportunities for us to grow in our faith and love for God. It takes this call to us to be wholehearted in our living for God, and places it in the context of our lives being surrounded and encircled by the living God.

We live in God. I suppose that takes us to those words, 'where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence?' To which the one writing supplies the answer as well as the question, nowhere. There's nowhere we can go where God will not be there too, because this world exists inside God.

Well I won't go on about that because it's a bit difficult to get your head around at the best of times. Takes a lot of imagination to try and see the world surrounded by God and yet also filled with God. Thanks Paul.

And anyway, I was asked to look at chapter 12 which is stuffed full of really big ideas about what it means to live a life surrounded by God. Thanks Michael!

It begins with this beautiful idea of our response to God's wholehearted love which is to offer ourselves wholeheartedly in return. Everything we do: eating, sleeping, work and relationships: we're invited to open them to God as an offering, a gift! Our gift to God.

It's really saying let your living be to the glory of God. Let who you are speak about who God is. In that sense, become like little people shaped bundles of hope in the world.

It puts that in opposition to the idea that our culture and the people around us is the source of our shaping. Where our culture tells us that to be important you need to own things, or where the messages around us tells men to be macho and women to look a particular way to be beautiful; the bible says grow up, don't get dragged down into these things which simply make us slaves to other people. Rather, if we let God be the one who brings the best out of us, I like that idea of bringing the best out of us, then our lives will be changed.

To do this keep your eyes fixed on Jesus.

Paul says its because he recognises all that God has given him that he writes. He invites us to keep our focus on all that God has done for us in Jesus. It's God's goodness that marks us out. Not our own goodness, but God's which we offer as service to others.

But our pride often gets in the way and the things we do often become ways of us making ourselves seem good, and even though sometimes its easy to understand why we do that; we haven't always been told positive things about ourselves; many of us work out of a very negative view of ourselves and we try to overcome that by appearing to be confident or knowing the answers, or being first at everything, or taking charge of things – and a whole range of ways we try to overcome those feelings of self doubt which are powerful in us and run very deep. But, here, our little bundle of hopefulness is asked instead to keep our eyes fixed on the one who gives us our true worth – God. When we understand our lives to be surrounded by the God who is always wanting our best, always wanting the best for us, who gave us the best that he had in his Son, Jesus, then all that we do, instead of pointing to our selves, should point others to God. It's like we're saying 'Look, look, at the way God changes life. There's so much more yet to be.'

Now, that's really going against what celebrity and wealth culture wants. The get rich quick by watching me do outrageous things in front of you all! The fame for a day by pretending your going to be the next Diana Ross when you can't string two notes together. Who's making the money? Who's having the laugh? Who's gaining the glory? Or even deeper than that, more sinister, the if I put a sticker that says this cladding, this glass is safe to out in tower blocks, I can make a lot of money, I can take the chance, who is gaining the riches? Or if I just keep repeating all lives matter, perhaps people will stop thinking about why some lives are treated unfairly or have less opportunity, or don't get the breaks; who is gaining an unfair advantage? Can you see how these ways of thinking might lead to despair?

Romans 12 invites us to a more mature interpretation of what gives hope. It's fairly dense in its suggestion that we offer all we are and do as a way of giving God the glory for saving us from those who belittle and use others for their own benefit.

And if we're to understand ourselves as being surrounded by God, then we're also to see ourselves as connected to each other. Through our being together, through our common understanding of what God's done for us in Jesus, the best way for us to live is first giving God the glory and two realising how much we need each other.

We're like a body.

Which is made up of all different parts. A leg and an arm. A head and body. A carpal tunnel and a bladder. And we're all needed. We all work together to create one body. All connected to the blood supply of faith.

The body is an image developed elsewhere too like when he's talking to the people of God in Corinth and not being led astray by idols. He makes something of a gruesome point about chopped off toes and fingers, which of course, when they're no longer attached to the rest of the body, quickly die. Cut off from the blood supply. So as well as being invited to give God glory in all we are and do, we're also invited to recognise one another's importance and celebrate that. Together we are to be an even bigger bundle of hope!

We all have our part to play. Who are the encouragers, who are the ideas people, who makes sure we are abiding by the rules? Who is making things safe for others, who is listening when some are despondent about restrictions? Who is using their gifts of words, or technology, or admin, or building relationships and spends time thinking about what music will help others worship? Or who makes sure the money is all kept in order and safe? And so much more. They are all part of the body and do these things out of a sense of gratitude and to give glory to God. And it never hurts for others to recognise the blessing of that and say thanks for telling us about God through your bundle of hopeful giving. Thanks for reminding us of the way God changes lives and turns things upside down. Thanks for being a living message about the way God is at work. Thanks for showing us again God's goodness.

Romans puts it like this: *Let's just go ahead and be what we were made to be, without enviously or pridefully comparing ourselves with each other, or trying to be something we aren't. If you preach, just preach God's Message, nothing else; if you help, just help, don't take over; if you teach, stick to your teaching; if you give encouraging guidance, be careful that you don't get bossy; if you're put in charge, don't manipulate; if you're called to give aid to people in distress, keep your eyes open and be quick to respond; if you work with the disadvantaged, don't let yourself get irritated with them or depressed by them. Keep a smile on your face*

Then it goes on to say about keeping love at the centre of who you are. Love is key. But again it's not some flaky romantic notion of love, some warm fuzzy feeling inside. It wasn't that kind of love that held Jesus on a cross.

It's the kind of love that's selfless, which wants the best for others too, which is focussed on other's needs. It's very hard but also our calling as we try to be like a body, all connected, needing each other, being a body of hope in our community. So accepting who we are, trying to keep our eyes fixed on Jesus, and trying to ensure that all we do speaks of hope, offers another reality which has joy, harmony, lifts the spirit, makes someone smile, helps them see their place in the body, their connectedness. So we let God be God, the one who judges, and we try never to see ourselves as better than anyone else but instead celebrate the good in each other because that's also part of God's gift to us.

With God, it's all upside down from the way the powerful structures of this world try to do things. Feed your hungry enemies? Go the extra mile? Reach out to the stranger? Not so you are seen as good, but so that your hope for the kingdom will surround others with hope too and lead them to Jesus.

Hymn [Christ be our light](#)

Intercessions

Canticle

(Together)

***Christ, as a light
illumine and guide me.
Christ, as a shield
overshadow me.
Christ under me;
Christ over me;
Christ beside me
on my left and my right.
This day be within and without me,
lowly and meek, yet all-powerful.
Be in the heart of each to whom I speak;
in the mouth of each who speaks unto me.
This day be within and without me,
lowly and meek, yet all-powerful.
Christ as a light;
Christ as a shield;
Christ beside me
on my left and my right.***

Words of Offering There are plates at the door as we leave to give to the work of God in this place. We pause in quiet to make an offering of our lives inviting God to shape our lives to be more Christlike. That together our gifts will be enough to sustain the witness of Tyndale in the community we are called to serve.

God grant us the grace to see the needs of God's kingdom and respond with passion, kindness, generosity and hopefulness.

So we share the grace with each other:

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.*

Hymn [To God be the glory](#)

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

At the end as people leave [Lord of the dance](#)