

Welcome

Welcome everyone to the worship of Tyndale Baptist Church once again - if you're in church, watching on-line, watching later, or following the script.

Again, the reminder for those in church that there can be no standing or singing (apart from under your breath) and please utter the responses into your masks...thank you for following the COVID 19 rules and layout as you arrived – and please follow the one way system & the steward's directions as you leave.

This morning the service will include an act of communion . It is the centrepiece of Christian worship, but requiring as it does, usually, eating and drinking, breaking and sharing, always accompanied by the close touching and speaking of the Peace it is difficult to do during this pandemic – it doesn't lend itself to social-distancing and mask-wearing. But as I've said before, just because something is difficult doesn't mean it is not good- -- it is good that today's service includes communion, albeit in a way that may not give full expression to all that it means. You will have been offered a sealed 'wafer and wine' cup when you came in and this will be used in the communion service.

But we know what communion means, well enough; and what it means is all of a piece with what the whole faith means – God has come to us and our world in Jesus – and died to save us, and risen..

['Jesus is King and we will extol Him'](#)

Call to worship

King of our hearts; of the world; of the universe – an old world, King, for an ever-new idea, that there is one above all, who is to be obeyed and worshipped and who has power over all – this is Jesus. We come before him, his loyal subjects, whom he has called his friends also – we, the friends of the King, gather in a world that doesn't recognise his authority, to honour him, and to worship God in his name.

BPW 51 ['Holy, holy, holy'](#)

Opening Prayer

Lord, you are holy; Lord, you are mighty, Lord, you are above and beyond; Lord you are here in the spirit of Jesus; Lord we rejoice in the glorious paradox at the heart of things, and we worship – for you are our life and the source of all life; we love you, from whom all love flows; we rest in your peace, who has brought peace into the world.

It's paradoxical in a divided, fearful, suffering world, but in that world we live by faith in the truth of God the almighty known in Jesus the suffering servant – and we worship

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

[Exodus 20.1-4,7-9,12-20](#)

[Matthew 21.33-46](#)

Sermon

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 on towards your Kingdom. Amen.

The world is changing. Oh. It's always been changing. I dare say Peter Webb mentioned change in the 70s & 80s...! Still, the world is changing: after coronavirus it will never be the same again. Coming to church feels like that, doesn't it? The world is changing. It's always been changing. You could say that change is the only certain thing, along with death and taxes..the world is changing.

But aside from some of the obvious changes all round us, like smartphones..

It's changing more fundamentally as well. Brexit is coming – together with lorry parks! (sorry, my neutrality slipped there..).

There used to be a Cold War, then the USSR collapsed; for a while the US was the only superpower but now the world's dividing again between the US & China; maybe one day China will become the most powerful nation in the world.

But Britain once was. Before, European countries divided up the world between them – though don't forget S America, India, Islamic civilisations.

Before that the Holy Roman Empire; before that, Rome, Greece, Persia, Assyria, Babylon, Egypt, Chinese dynasties, Genghis Khan, the Mogul emperors, Incas, Aztecs..

The world has always been changing.

The harsh parables of Jesus suit a changing world. They were told to folk whose world was changing – who had thought that their world, religion, way of life – was the only one

Then..the parable: There was a vineyard – *their world* – with a landowner – *their God* – and tenants – *them* – and the landowner's slaves – *the prophets of Israel* – and at last the landowner's son – *by now they knew that Jesus was talking about himself* – and

Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people that produces the fruits of the kingdom. The one who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; and it will crush anyone on whom it falls.

I wonder if the folk who were beginning to see that their world was changing had yet to decide if they wanted to hold on – or accept the change, and follow *the stone*

And just as the tenants had done away with all the prophets – legend had it that all the prophets had come to sticky ends – so, Jesus was going to die, at the hands of those same tenants, whose world was changing. Couldn't accept the change, see – the changing world..

It always happens, doesn't it? You can see it happening right now! When old certainties break down, when changes come – folk get lary, a little crazy..

The Proud boys in the US, authoritarian govts trying to keep control – Belarus; China, N Korea..parts of Europe; it's only slightly better here.

Everyone's casting about for answers; conspiracy theories everywhere – just like W B Yeats: 'the best lack all conviction, while the worst are full of passionate intensity'

I know this doesn't come that close to us – or maybe it does, we just don't look for it.

Maybe coronavirus is making it happen all over – showing institutions up for their failures; showing politicians up as weak, turning science into a new religion, making us realise how much we need the hard work and sacrifice of the carers in care homes, the cleaners in hospitals, the refuse-collectors in our streets..

This much is true: in changing times anyone who stands up for the truth, talks about justice, calls for peace, tries to love the least lovely - is likely to come to a sticky end..

Look, we've had a glimpse into gospel hope these last few weeks. Soon enough we'll come to Christmas when we'll want to talk again about light, but in the meantime

The crux of the matter. From my climbing days I remember: every climb has its crux – crags in Derbyshire; challenging walls in North Wales/the Lakes; huge cliffs in Yosemite –

every route has a crux - a few crucial, difficult moves somewhere in the middle – everything before has been leading up to it; everything after is a breeze, but, always, the crux.

The gospel has a crux as well. First the nice stories of Jesus, sheep, seeds, loaves and fishes; later the glories and hope of Easter but first – the crux –

'Crux' comes from cross – after the nice stories, before the hope, light & new life - the crux – cross.

Jesus has to die. It's what the parable means, of course. In a changing world, the world that gave birth to the 10 commandments (we heard some..; the world that did away with the prophets, is passing, changing – the last act of the old world will be to do away with Jesus.)

No wonder Jesus told such harsh stories in his last days – to his few followers who had begun to see which way the wind was blowing – who were still with him – though soon enough they would abandon him as well – couldn't decide...

To them – the hint of a hope, really; though I doubt they could see it yet:

'Have you never read in the scriptures: "The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone"

The crux of the matter is the death of Jesus & the hope is upside down. In their world *as in ours* the hope is upside down: *the rejected stone has become the capstone.*

Coronavirus has shown us this again, hasn't it? Those overlooked carers; hardly noticed cleaners; refuse collectors – how many times have you walked past a refuse collector & taken no notice?

Coronavirus has shown us, hasn't it? They do the most important work of all. We couldn't manage without them. I wonder if that's not the most important lesson of this pandemic; maybe that's what this pandemic has all been about; maybe the coronavirus is, really, the gospel in disguise – *the rejected stone has become the capstone.*

I wonder if, difficult though it is to do it – communion isn't essential in this changing world – *this* is the crux of the matter. Jesus comes to us as bread and wine – death and suffering – and these things make us whole –

& it's upside down..& it's for us to decide.. this was the Lord's doing, & it is marvellous in our eyes"

CG 73 'Look forward in faith'

Tyndale Virtual Singing Group

Offering and the peace/grace

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.

Communion

The table of the Lord is spread. Here we remember the sacrifice of Christ for the sin of the world.. Here we encounter the risen Lord, feed on him by faith, and discover together the body of Christ on earth in the Church. And here we look forward in the light of His promise to return. Then those who know him a little and long to know him more, those who are seeking him and who are weary of their sin and doubt, are invited to come and share the feast.

Confession

Lord our God, we confess that we are wounded, broken people, part of a divided body, the Church, in a fractured and hurting world. We confess that not only do we find it hard to live whole lives, we also find it hard to imagine greater wholeness, let alone healing, amongst us, in the circles of the Church and in the world outside.

All this we confess, for there is nowhere else for us to begin. Lord who shared in the world's brokenness, restore us to wholeness again; Lord who gave himself up to death for the world's healing, perform a work of healing amongst us as we meet around this table. Lord, whose Spirit breathes through every life, bringing signs of wholeness we could never imagine, as we pray:

Pause.

Here the words of the Lord: 'behold I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hear my voice and open the door I will come in and eat with them, and they with me.' Amen

Institution

For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you; the Lord Jesus on the night he was betrayed took bread, and when he had given thanks he broke it and said, take, eat, this is my body which is for you, do this in remembrance of me. IN the same way after supper he took the cup saying this cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this whenever you drink it in memory of me – for whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

Thanksgiving

We offer bread and give our thanks, for the bread that sustains us from the good of the earth and that living bread that inspires with the life of heaven.

We offer wine and give our thanks, for the wine that sustains us from the fruit of the earth and the new wine that flows to us from the life of heaven –

Responses

Leader Here is bread
All **Broken for the world's brokenness**
Leader Here is wine
All **Poured out for the world's suffering**
Leader How shall we eat?
All Longing for wholeness, looking to the One who died
Leader How shall we drink?
All **Needing to be healed, believing in the One who lives for ever.**
Leader In a broken, suffering world, with all those who long for God
All **We eat and drink in faith**

As the bread is broken, please open the seal and eat the wafer. As the wine is lifted up, please open the seal and drink together (Or take your own bread and wine if you are at home)

THE BREAD

The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed took bread, and when he had given thanks he broke it and said 'take eat, this is my body, which is for you'

THE WINE

In the same way, after supper he took the cup saying. "this cup is the new covenant in my blood, do this whenever you drink it in remembrance of me"

Prayer after communion

Lord, we have offered ourselves, our gifts and this bread and wine and seen the sign of your love here; may we see it at work in our world.

Lord, we have confessed our failure to live as your redeemed people; may we now live for the world's redemption.

Lord, we have reflected on our own divided selves and the fractures that run through our world; bring a fresh vision of wholeness and integrity, beginning in bread and wine.

Lord, we have recognised that many today struggle to cope; forces unleashed by this virus are beyond their control; turn our devotion into prayer for them and for us and lift us all, we pray.

Lord, we rejoice in the wholeness of which this table speaks – in Christ make us whole people once again.

CG 106 ['Safe in the Shadow of the Lord'](#)

Timothy Dudley-Smith

Blessing

The blessing of God almighty, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, be with us and remain with us, evermore

Thanks to Rachel M, Sarah D, and the Tyndale Singers for the recorded music, to Brian and Eileen for the readings and to Nick and Tina for getting the script in in the post. Thanks to today's stewards and 'preparers' and thanks to you all for taking part in this service today..

A 'together though apart' time follows at 11.30 am