

Notices

Good Morning, and welcome to our on-line service on this first Sunday in March, our service today will include the act of Holy Communion. .

Our worship is being conducted by our minister Michael Docker. I would like to thank him for leading us, and look forward to hearing God's message through his teaching and preaching.

Our Zoom coffee shop will take place as usual on Tuesday morning at 11.00 with the sign in details being able to be obtained through the Tyndale web site.

On Thursday evening at 7.30, again on Zoom, we will be holding another of Tyndale's fun evenings when we will be returning to the '80's with a game of Blankety Blank hosted by Graham Lewis. Please come along to either join in or to just watch.

The Annual Election of Deacons' will take place on Tuesday evening at our March Church Meeting. We have three nominations: David Bell, Graham Lewis & Ian Waddington. There will be an electronic vote available on the night as demonstrated at our last Church Meeting. There is also a postal vote which can be done by contacting me by either email or by telephone by the end of today. Ian Holyer has been appointed as the scrutineer.

Our thoughts and prayers remain with Rachel our Community Minister as she recovers at home following her surgery.

This service is followed by a time together but apart. Please join us if you are free.

Welcome

Welcome everyone to another recorded service Tyndale Baptist Church – recorded in the building, which remains closed as we as a community seek to stand with all those whose lives & livelihoods, businesses & employment, are closed down during this extended period.

In a few moments we shall proclaim again that God is present in this worship, but we acknowledge that that is a difficult thing to do in such a time as this, because the presence of God, for most of us most of the time, is synonymous with healing, peace and 'everything being put right' – and clearly everything is far from right in our world at the moment – so to speak of God's presence in such a world risks creating a huge disconnect between a religious way of looking at the world and the lived experience of so many.

It was ever thus. Frankly, it has *always* been difficult to speak of God's presence – or it should have been – and the easier it has been the greater has been the disconnect. It all comes down to what kind of a God we're talking about and what kind of experience of God's presence we're talking about.

The God we're talking about – the one, true God, over all and in all, before all things and beyond all things is, we believe, made known to us in Jesus. It's a 'constraint': we won't look anywhere else or to anybody or thing else to find out about God – we will only look to God who has been revealed to us in and through Jesus – and it will be, we believe, enough.

In Lent what of God has been revealed to us in and through Jesus comes into sharp focus in stories of suffering love, of sacrifice and ultimately of a 'hopeful death' so to speak.

So what we're doing is to speak of the presence of God in this worship through what has been revealed to us of suffering, sacrifice and death – hopeful, but thoroughly realistic – such things are part of the lived experience of many, near and far.

It is in and through the lived experiences of today that we should expect to find experiences of God; we're not here to escape, nor to try and create some alternative, religious reality, but to, as it were, hold our present reality and the presence of God together in the unending, mysterious dance of faith, and to follow the way along which Jesus leads us *hopefully*

CG 133 'Today I awake'

Tyndale Virtual singers

Call to Worship

This morning, this day, with all its mix of good and not-so-good experiences for each one of us – is what we give to God and what God gives to us, as he calls us, promises to be with us, and compels us to worship him, in Christ's name.

BPW 12 ['Jesus calls us here to meet him'](#)

Opening Prayer

Surrounded and held by the stories of Jesus, Lord, we worship you. All our words, songs and prayers rise from our hearts, from our lives, to where you dwell in marvellous light, and bring us down again to *this* world and *these lives* – where the stories were told and lived and known by those few ordinary folk who knew Jesus in their midst and sought to follow him.

Lord, they worshipped, and we worship also; they worshipped by lakes and in fields and on hillsides and we worship by neighbourhoods and in homes and on streets; in front of screens and in favourite rooms – they saw you walking amongst them and believed and worshipped – and we read and hear of you in the stories and we believe and worship also – Lord, you were very great in their world and loving towards them and you are very great in our world and loving towards us; they worshipped and we worship; they listened and we will listen; they saw and we look to see; they followed and we set out to follow; their world is our world, is your world, and we worship.

And they were frail and failed, and we are frail and we fail also – but they came as they were, and we come as we are as well – the grace that surrounded them surrounds us this day – and we worship you for that grace and gracious forgiveness; the way that lay before them – the way of suffering love, lies before us also and we, like them, worship you for that way – that suffered and suffers, that gave and gives, that died and dies, that rose and rises – Lord, we worship you for your Way in Jesus; Lord, we worship you in His name.

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

CG51 'How can I keep from singing?'

Mike Garnier

Readings

[Exodus 20:1-17](#)

[John 2:13-22](#)

Lord, cleanse the temples of our lives

Lord, cleanse the temples of our lives;
Where what we are is scarred with fears,
Bring us to know all that God loves
And holds and heals and hopes and hears.

Lord, cleanse the temples of the Church;
Where what we do conceals your voice,
Speak with your Word to change and teach
And overwhelm us with your grace.

Lord cleanse the temples of our day;
Where there is greed, where there is fear,
Rise with the anger of your Way
And drive corruption far from here.

Lord, cleanse the temple of our faith;
Where we believe our way alone,
Show us the freedom of your truth
And lead us out, and urge us on.

Lord, cleanse the temples of the World.
Where there's delusion, fraud or war
Bend us to follow where you've called
And show us what our lives are for.

Lord, build a temple in our hearts,
The Church, the World; where death devours -
Your Cross the sign that new life starts,
Your risen life for ever ours.

Tune: Maryton (BPW17); words: Michael Docker

Sermon

Let's not pretend, this Lent, that anything about following Jesus is easy. There's a kind of 'mainstream' idea about Jesus, formed largely from the picture that emerges from Matthew, Mark and Luke, that Jesus was a popular, well-loved country character, who was 'one of the people' in Galilee and that as he made his way to Jerusalem he grew more and more critical of the religious establishment and its opposition toward him gathered pace; then, first his 'fair-weather followers' and then gradually, painfully, his closest disciples, fell away, until at the last Jesus stood all alone before Pilate and went alone to his death.

It's an idea that mirrors our experience. We start out, perhaps as young people, passionate about Jesus' way, then gradually we get less and less passionate about him as the years go by until we sort-of peter out into the respectability and formality of the staid and steady denominations – meanwhile all the bangs and fizz of modern-day Christianity are to be found in each generation amongst the young turks in the newer churches, that meet in houses and warehouses or business units.

Following such a Jesus is a matter, then, of energy, radicalism, passion – you name it – applied to the historical example that emerges from the teachings and stories in the gospels; not exactly easy, but straightforward enough, depending on the way such stories are told and interpreted and the extent to which they're 'followed' by this or that Christian community.

But it's an idea that rings bells in the wider world as well. Donald Trump – he's not quite finished yet; in fact some of his followers fully expected him to be inaugurated as the only true US President since the 1870s on March 4th (last Thursday – didn't happen!) – Donald Trump was nothing if not the well-loved 'man of the people' (never mind that he's a billionaire) who went up against the establishment – stopped short of crucifixion, though!

Followers, though, there are aplenty – of Trump, much like the followers of any number of other inspiring figures...such as Jesus...?!

But there's another way of looking at all this. In John's gospel Jesus is *from Day One* a divisive, world-changing, challenging, all-powerful figure. He's the Word; he's only accepted by 'those who see'; he performs signs; he talks about 'being born again' and 'living water' and 'the bread of heaven'.

He's always laying into the religious establishment and even his closet followers don't really understand what he's on about; he's mystery, majesty, power and control combined. He tears into the structures of Israel, Samaria – the world, really – and, yes, he goes to his Cross alone, but always aware, always ready, always in control. He gives up his life, rather than has it taken from him. He is dangerous and beautiful, cosmic and wonderful, gentle and powerful all at once...and...it's never easy to stand with *Him*, see *Him*, follow *Him*.

Yet frankly, it's what our world needs. Our world *wants* easier, simpler, more certain, more sure ways. It wants vaccines and a roadmap to lead us through so we can go back to things as normal; it wants summer holidays, hugs and kisses, open restaurants and pubs, so it can have a bit of social interaction again; it wants laws to stop people being offended and the freedom for some to make money and it wants the poor and the oppressed to keep quiet and no one in power to be held to account and a climate that doesn't change and religions that keep people sweet and healthcare without cost and sunlit uplands for ever.

It's easy to follow Jesus in such a world, if Jesus is just another inspiring guru; another religious hero. You can claim him for your cause and festoon him with the noise and puff of your religion and call others to follow your way of doing things and they'll be following Jesus – easy.

But that's not what it needs, our world – it's not what we need...we all want things – and if we want, we can have some religion, - but the things we want are not what we *need* –

In John's gospel Jesus overturns the tables in the temple near the beginning of his ministry; it's the same story that comes near the climax of Matthew, Mark and Luke, where it's part of the 'final straw' events that lead the authorities to move against the upstart trouble-maker, to arrest him, put him on trial, put him to death.

John, however, uses the story to set the scene – looking back from his perspective after Easter he can see that all along the wandering country preacher from Galilee was *more* than just a wandering country preacher from Galilee; all along, from the outset, he was the Word, the Bread of Life, the very power of God come to overturn the world – the tables of greed; the traders in injustice, the temples of excess and fear and delusion that poke up out of the landscape of our failed world.

And what such a world needs - what we need – is a power greater than our powers; a wisdom deeper than our knowledge, a Word truer than all the words we speak and hear – it's not what we want, but our wants only lead to more greed, more frustration, more injustice, more hubris, more death;

but this Jesus, this Word, this Bread of Life, this Living Water, is what we *need*.

Lent reminds us that following such a one is not easy. There's a tendency these days to domesticate Jesus, but the Jesus that leaps off the pages of John's gospel *won't* be domesticated, and following him isn't just a case of trying to put one or two of his pithy sayings into practice – with greater enthusiasm and energy when you're young and increasing levels of tokenism and mediocrity as you get older –

Following this Jesus is more about 'standing' with this Jesus against all the wiles of the world *and our world – even our religious world*; it's about looking at all the world's ways and maybe saying 'no', maybe saying 'yes' – 'cos it may be that ideas about justice or peace or diversity come from different places than just a few pages of a couple of ancient manuscripts.

But it's not the ideas that matter so much as it is the power behind the ideas – and supremely that power is the power over life and death – and there's only one source of that power – and it's the source that John's gospel presents when it presents Jesus as Word, as 'Bread of life' as 'Living Water';

Who overturns tables; who tears down temples, who meets Nicodemus (who comes at night as he weighs up the choice he must make) and says 'you must be born again'; who goes to Samaria – *Samaria*, where no good teacher of Israel would go – and talks to a woman and offers her living water; who turns water into wine; who is the Way, the Truth and the Life, who cries from the Cross 'it is finished' – who rises and revives the life and faith of Mary, Peter, Thomas – all the rest

Who was there at the beginning and changes everything and is the Christ, the Son of God

It is not easy to follow Him, to stand with Him in such a world as this. Lent is not easy – not just because of a few deprivations, like giving up chocolate or sugar, but because Lent leads to Good Friday and to Easter Day and calls us to stand with the Lord of life..

It is not what we want, any of us, but we only want things that will make us happy or comfortable or content with our lot, or that will make us feel a sense of belonging, but what we and our world *need* is a power to overcome the power of sin and death, to overturn the tables of greed and injustice and the temples of excess and fear and delusion that poke up out of the landscape of our failed world.

And – remember those tables he overturned? Well, this table will never be overturned – it *groans* with the weight of the things of God.

It is not easy, but it is good, very good, in such a death-dealing world as this – will you come to this table? Will you stand in the midst of this world – your world - with the Lord of life?

Words of Offering

Lord we come to you once more - and we would stand with Jesus – who holds the power over life and death – *our life...our death* – and as we stand so we give – of ourselves in these and all our gifts – and this bread and wine – and as we give we look, by faith in Christ, to the transformation of the things of earth into the things of heaven...Amen.

['We come to your feast'](#)

Communion

Invitation

The table of the Lord is spread. Here we see in broken bread and poured out wine symbols of body and blood, signs of the Kingdom and emblems of salvation. There is no calculation here; no risk assessment; no measurable outcome – this is freedom, this is love extravagant as death, this is life.

And here a call is made; not to the worthy, the saintly, the well-trained, the in-crowd, but to the sinful, the weak, the poor-in-spirit, the ones who know themselves to be in need of God's constant help and forgiveness and grace – to any, who are prepared to hear the call; come, and eat and drink, and live.

Confession

How shall I repay the lord for all his benefits to me? I will take the cup of salvation and call on the name of the Lord. O Lord our God, before your grace we may do no more than receive, and in that hope we make our confession.

We confess a Christian faith marked mostly by faith in the familiar, and a refusal to look for what is truly of You in the things around us both old and new.

We confess lives lived for their own comfort, often heedless of the claims of others to the good things we enjoy.

Father forgive us and help us to receive what in Christ you freely offer - seen here in bread and wine – costly grace and suffering love and life everlasting. We wait on your word..

In John's gospel Jesus says, "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty."

Thanks be to God, 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

Lord we thank you for every moment of awareness of your life in us and in all the world; for the pleasures of each day, the challenges of each hour, the promises of a future filled with your love. We thank you for the signs that are more than signs – in worship and in service and supremely at this table, where bread and wine become more than things of earth as we break them, pour them out and take them to ourselves – in spirit with one another. We thank you for your life here – and because here, in every place, and in every place because in Christ you came to that one most terrible place of all, and carried us through.

Therefore with angels and archangels and with all the company of heaven we proclaim your great and glorious name, for ever praising you and saying Holy Holy Holy, God of power and might. Heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest!

God our Father, pour out the Holy Spirit on all your people, that we may have faith, and upon these gifts of bread and wine and this eating and drinking, that this may be for us an entering into the mysteries of the body and blood of our risen and ascended Lord – so that we may receive Christ to ourselves once again, for the strengthening of our faith, the assuring of our hope, and the deepening of our love.

Responses

Leader Here is bread

All **For us to feed on Christ**

Leader Here is wine

All **For us to refresh our souls.**

Leader Our suffering Lord calls us to his table

All **In Lent we come in brokenness**

Leader Our dying Lord calls us his friends

All In Lent we come with empty hearts

Leader How shall we eat?

All Weeping with those who weep,

Leader How shall we drink?

All Mourning with those who mourn.

Leader Christ who dies gives us his body & blood

All We eat and drink in faith

The Bread and Wine

Prayer after communion

Lord, we have offered our gifts, 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 lived among temples of excess & tables of greed and destruction; may we now live for beauty, truth and human flourishing in your world

Lord, we would stand with the Spirit of your Son, the Word, the Bread of life; help us always to stand with him and follow his way of suffering love and to serve in his name.

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.

BPW 321 ['The kingdom of God is justice & joy'](#)

Victoria Methodist Church

Benediction

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

Once again thanks to everyone who has made today's service possible – Ian recording and processing; Nick & Tina printing and posting; Ian & Alison reading; Rachel sorting music, Tyndale's singers singing and Mike Garnier playing – thank you one and all for taking part.

The Deacons are commending a date for re-opening to the Church Meeting on Tuesday. Ahead of that decision, and in anticipation of seeing a congregation in Tyndale again, I wish you all well and assure you of the thoughts and prayers of everyone involved in the leadership of the church, as we all continue to pray for & support one another, as we seek to live by faith and follow the way of Christ towards Holy Week, Good Friday and Easter Day.

['Be Not Afraid'](#)

by Catholic Artists from Home