

## **Notices**

Good Morning & welcome to Tyndale on this fourth Sunday of June. If you are a visitor with us, I extend a special warm welcome and hope you feel at home with us. Our worship is being conducted by our minister Michael Docker. I would like to thank him in person 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 11.00am with the sign in details being able to be obtained through the Tyndale web site.

The funeral for Barbara Hill is taking place on Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> July. There is a service at Canford Crematorium at 1.30pm follow by St Monica's Chapel at 2.15pm.

## **Welcome**

Welcome to this service at Tyndale Baptist Church: here in the church, on-line, to the later recording, or following the script. Welcome as we meet once again in these unusual circumstances to worship..

## **CG85 'May your love be upon us, O Lord'**

### **Call to Worship**

We come together to place our trust once again in the living God who has promised to be with us – who has shown us that He is with us in Jesus and called us to come and worship God in His name

## **BPW12 'Jesus calls us'**

### **Opening Prayer**

Lord God we ask you to meet us in these moments as we are, but first we acknowledge you for who you are, God of mercy and grace, the very power behind everything in the universe.

Now, Lord, meet with us; we come before you in Christ's name, for he has shown us more of your love than we had any right to see and he has brought us the living reality of your mercy and grace -

We ask you to forgive us, because of what Christ has done for us; we know we have sinned; our regrets are sincere but our failures are real & our best efforts are inadequate. Lord in sorrow we wait on your mercy once more; touch us & restore us we pray with your love – we wait on your word...

*"Listen, says Jesus, I stand at the door and knock, if any who hear my voice and open the door I will come in and eat with them, and they with me."*

Now, Lord, with thankful hearts, we ask you to help us as we worship – make us true to what we have claimed to be & make our worship true to what you have called us to be, as we offer you the best of our hearts & lives, in Jesus' name, 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 & the glory are yours, now & forever. Amen

## **'10000 reasons'**

### **Old Testament Reading**

[2 Samuel 1.1,17-27](#)

### **'Give thanks with a grateful heart'**

### **New Testament Reading**

[2 Corinthians 8.7-15](#)

## Sermon

*Lord we give you this time; may speech be true; may hearing and understanding be Spirit-breathed & may deciding lead to action that mends the world*

Stop all the clocks, cut off the telephone,  
Prevent the dog from barking with a juicy bone,  
Silence the pianos and with muffled drum  
Bring out the coffin, let the mourners come.

'Funeral Blues' by W H Auden, written in the 1930s but made famous by the film '4 Weddings & a funeral'

Let aeroplanes circle moaning overhead  
Scribbling on the sky the message He Is Dead  
Put crepe bows round the white necks of the public doves,  
Let the traffic policemen wear black cotton gloves.

A bit like David's lament for Saul and Jonathan in our reading from Samuel;

*You mountains of Gilboa, let there be no dew or rain upon you, nor bounteous fields!* A mourning poem -

*How the mighty have fallen in the midst of the battle! Jonathan lies slain upon your high places. I am distressed for you, my brother Jonathan;*

But something else unites these two poems, separated by centuries and cultures

David writes: 'greatly beloved were you to me; your love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women.'

Trad. commentary says it was just David's way of expressing the deep bonds of male friendship. Others read 'passing the love of women' as a clear reference to David & Jonathan's homosexual relationship; not just in the 21<sup>st</sup> C; the 'gay' relationship has been portrayed as far back as the 16<sup>th</sup> century

Auden was gay: He doesn't seem to have written the poem for any particular person, still:

He was my North, my South, my East and West,  
My working week and my Sunday rest,  
My noon, my midnight, my talk, my song;  
I thought that love would last for ever: I was wrong.

In '4 Weddings & a funeral' Matthew reads the poem at the funeral of his male lover Gareth

The stars are not wanted now: put out every one;  
Pack up the moon and dismantle the sun;  
Pour away the ocean and sweep up the wood;  
For nothing now can ever come to any good.

You can hear aching grief in David's words as well..

*Your glory, O Israel, lies slain upon your high places! How the mighty have fallen!*

No intent to be morbid, today, but one of the themes in the background of the life of the wider church and my ministry these past years has been that of same-sex relationships.

Society has come a long way in my lifetime, from the days when homosexual acts were still illegal (Alan Turing the computer genius was prosecuted for homosexual acts in the 1950s) through the risqué humour

of Kenneth Horn, John Inman, Larry Grayson - through the AIDS epidemic, through gay characters in soap operas, to today's world-wide pride marches, festivals & *ubiquity* of LGBTQ lifestyles .

My children have gay friends; gay people appear on TV, in films & social media all the time..

Behind all this lies a world of pain. Richard Wilson on Desert Island Discs – been 'out' as gay for years but when he was asked if it was difficult growing up being gay, you could hear it in his voice, 'oh, yes' he said.

The Christian Church continues to have its own struggles. In many denominations in many countries the lines are drawn between gay-affirming outlooks & trad. gay-condemning outlooks – & as in the world, so in the church: pain, rejection, misunderstanding & grudging acceptance seem to mark the way.

It's come close at Tyndale – gay members; debates about Civil Partnerships; standing against the prevailing tide in the Association; supporting gay Christians via the Community Ministry in particular

But whatever doctrinal or biblical issues all this raises let's not lose sight of love. David's lament again:

*I am distressed for you, my brother Jonathan; greatly beloved were you to me; your love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women.*

Love..not so much doctrine; more...pain, loss, longing...Paul – '*the genuineness of your love against the earnestness of others*' – I know the passage in 2 Corinthians is about fund-raising mostly; still....love

*'For you know the generous act of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that by his poverty you might become rich.*

We ought, I think, to hold on to that oft-quoted idea in the NT (expressed so well in John's letter - *Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God*).

Oh, I know, love can be a cover-word for all manner of behaviour – 'Do the most loving thing in any situation' begs all kinds of questions: one person's understanding of love may be different to another's.

Still – the 'grace of our Lord Jesus Christ' that may inspire some to be more generous in their giving is the same grace that ought to inspire us all to be more accepting in our living –

More accepting of...Those of different ethnicities? Refugees? Foreigners? Gay people?

It all depends where you start, I think- and if you start with God's love for *everyone* and determine to get alongside *anyone* in their pain, loss or longing to demonstrate that love

Then – Auden in reverse, I think – not 'For nothing now can ever come to any good'. But, to paraphrase (slightly) Paul: 'God works all things together for good for those who love him,'

### **Offering prayer**

Lord, we come to you again, as those who would look to your love to be the first and foremost thing in our lives, as Christians and as a church – guiding us in our decisions and behaviour and attitudes to others. Lord as your love has welcomed us so we would be welcoming to others; as your love accepts us as we are so also we would be accepting of others and as your love changes us as we follow Christ so we would rejoice in the changes we see in all who name His name. So we give of ourselves in these and all our gifts, in the hope that your love will be known in all the earth.

### **The Grace**

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

### **'Lord you hear the cry'**

#### **Prayers I**

For all who grieve and lament the loss of loved ones, businesses or livelihoods, or the world they once knew. *A moment of silence* - Lord bring us new comfort, security and vision, rooted in Christ.

Lord in your mercy

**Hear our prayer**

For all who struggle against the prejudices of others; to accept themselves as they are; to accept those with different cultures and lifestyles, sexualities; experiences. *A moment of silence*. Lord bring us a fresh awareness of your love & welcome, whoever we are and however life is for us, as we put our faith in Christ.

Lord in your mercy

**Hear our prayer**

### **'We will meet'**

#### **Prayers II**

For all who bring comfort to the lonely and bereaved; in hospitals, care homes; at funerals & in empty homes or lives. For all who are building a new world to replace the old one. *A moment of silence*. Lord, strengthen our resources of care, wisdom & creativity, as we seek to follow Christ

Lord in your mercy

**Hear our prayer**

For all who are working to undermine prejudices in world and church; for all who are helping individuals with mental and physical issues of identity and sexuality or challenging cultures and experiences in world and church. *A moment of silence*. Lord, lead us into new understanding, greater empathy and fresh expressions of your Kingdom, in and through Christ.

Lord in your mercy

**Hear our prayer**

We offer these and all our prayers in the name of Jesus, Amen.

### **'Will you come and follow me?'**

#### **Benediction**

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

Thanks to everyone who has made today's service possible – Ian recording & processing; Nick & Tina printing & posting; John & Lesley reading; Rachel sorting music & playing with Ali & Dave, Tyndale singers singing 'live' & virtually; the Stewarding Team preparing, watching over us & cleaning up after – thanks everyone for taking part.

As restrictions continue and we begin to anticipate greater freedom we seek God's wisdom as we continue to live by faith till we meet again.

### **'The peace of the earth'**