

## Notices

Good morning, and welcome to Tyndale on this third Sunday of August. 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 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.

Thank you.

## Welcome

I add my word of welcome to everyone, here in the church, on-line or following the script. As we continue to make our way through a confusing, confused world, we are ever more drawn to the source of all things – the wisdom of God; and we worship

**'Who can know' (I stand in awe)**

Martyn Layzell

## Call to Worship

We who gather here; we who are called here; we who come together in each other's company seeking after the things of God – wisdom, and peace, wholeness and justice and love – shining in the face of Jesus Christ, we are called and in his name we worship

**BPW 562 'Praise to the holiest in the height'** (omit vv 4&5)

## Opening Prayer

So we worship – and praise - From before the world began until the farthest reaches of eternity, From the sea bursting out of its womb to the wind ceasing from its chase, In the constancy of created things as well as in their variety and fickleness - in the vastness of the universe and the forgotten corner of our hearts,

God, you were and are and will be – and we worship you.

And we worship and seek forgiveness – for all that we have neglected to do, in love, in forgiveness itself; for all we have done that is selfish, thoughtless or feckless

God, you were and are and will be – and we ask you to forgive us

& we worship and give thanks – for your promise to restore; for all that has come to us; for a good world in which to live, change & achieve, for each other, for companionship, help & humour, for our own gifts, for our dreams & our achievements

God, you *were* in Christ & *are* in Christ & *will be* in Christ – we thank you & turn to you again

## 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*

**CG 108 'Sing of the Lord's goodness'**

**New Testament Reading:** [Ephesians 5.15-20](#)

**Old Testament reading:** [1 Kings 2.10-12; 3.3-14](#)

**BPW 58 'Meekness and majesty'**

## Sermon – where is wisdom to be found?

The king is dead – that's the end of the story of David, then. Long live the King – Solomon.

The King is dead...after all the build up, after Goliath, Jonathan, Bathsheba, Uria, Absalom;

David, the King, is dead. After the shenanigans of the succession we look forward – Solomon accedes to the throne – and what does he ask God for? Wisdom....

Can you imagine any leader today asking for wisdom? Vladimir Putin, or Xi Zinping, or Boris Johnson for that matter – or Macron, or Merkel, or Lukashenko, or Orban, or Bolsonaro..

Wisdom? I don't think so. Money, perhaps, or popularity, or a bit more nationalist fervour or economic success or clear scientific advice...but...wisdom?

I don't think so. Mind you, I don't suppose we ask God for wisdom very much, either

'Give me strength..' maybe...' 'make me pure, but not yet'...possibly...'

'I wish I & my loved ones could be stronger, richer, healthier, better protected' ...likely

That's the kind of thing we're bound to pray about – I wonder if our prayers aren't formed by the expectations and ambitions of the world around us – In our billionaire-dominated, nation-state orientated; immigration-agitated; pandemic-discombobulated world..

But..wisdom? How often have we asked God to make us wise? Lord, make me wise – there's a prayer for you to pray with your breakfast cereal – Lord, make me wise..

Solomon asked for wisdom. He saw how great was the task before him; he saw how many were the people relying on him; he saw how difficult it was going to be deciding between good and evil – he admitted that before such immensity he was like a little child

And he asked God for wisdom. Maybe it's a bit legendary now, the wisdom of Solomon.

Maybe it's based on an appreciation of the civil service that developed during Solomon's rule. Still..wisdom - Solomon asked the Lord for wisdom - 'an understanding mind' –

The Bible's hot on wisdom. Wisdom like a personal, separate characteristic of God. '*The Lord created me the first of all his works*' says Proverbs, talking about Wisdom –

A whole literature has grown up called the wisdom literature in the Bible – some of the Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Job, - it's not just the Bible ; whole collections of writings from the ancient near east, from ancient Greece, from Islam, Indian writings...Chinese writings..

As if for centuries, the whole world thought of wisdom as being something sacred and precious and *vital* for the ordering and running of the world –

for growing a society on the principles of justice & fairness; for helping nations to get along, for helping individuals live the good, virtuous life, the best life human beings could ever live.

I suddenly find I am a conservative in this regard...what's wrong with our world that we no longer think wisdom is worth pursuing?

money, yes, fame & fortune yes, security, yes...national pride, yes...lower immigration, yes....

But *wisdom*? The collected thoughts & ways of living of the generations? I'm not sure the content matters so much – wisdom in Proverbs & Psalms may or may not be easy to translate into life in our world –

As the asking. That's what Solomon is known for – *asking* – asking God to give him an 'understanding mind'

I know this is a bit simplistic, still – climate change; coronavirus; international relations; warfare; refugees; immigrants – much of this has occurred and we have stopped *asking*

We sought after money, ran after fame & popularity, were seduced by nationalist fervour; craved economic success and thought clear scientific advice would show us the way,

But we stopped asking. Wisdom; the accumulated thoughts & ways of living of the generations?

Please God let there be more history, language, science, art to keep us in touch with those thoughts & ways of living; to translate them, inspire us with them, work out what they might mean in today's world –

but most of all, please God there might be more *asking*

That's what stands out for me in the story of Solomon's dream before God – *humility* in the face of the momentous task before him. Where, today, is humility to be found? There's plenty of hubris, arrogance, behind-the-scenes corruption, chumocracy and all the rest

But precious little *humility*...and *asking*. Please God that we & our leaders might come before God in humility & ask –

It would be good to have more wisdom, don't you think? As Paul says in Ephesians;

*'Be careful then how you live, not as unwise people but as wise, making the most of the time, because the days are evil. So do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.*

Please God that we might be prepared to *ask*.. and what does God answer?

*I give you also what you have not asked, both riches and honour all your life;*

That's Solomon's reputation for you – wise & incredibly, overwhelmingly *wealthy* – billionaire wealthy, I imagine.

Doesn't this remind you of Jesus, speaking to his followers about the Kingdom...?

'*seek first the kingdom of God & His righteousness, & all these things shall be added to you*'.

See, it's coming before God in *humility* at the size of the task – surely with climate change, the deteriorating situation in Afghanistan, the growing refugee problem in the world & the rollout of vaccines to much of the world that remains unvaccinated – the task is *enormous*

And *asking – wisdom; the Kingdom of God – am I going too far in making the link? There seems to be a strong link between the figure of wisdom in the OT and Jesus in the NT*

In fact you could say that the wisdom of God is exactly the gospel of Jesus Christ, who died on a cross; who rose again – foolishness wiser than all the wisdom of the world

But, remember, it's the asking; it's the coming before God in humility – would that our leaders – that we – would come before God..

And *ask*....where is wisdom to be found? Look to the cross of Christ

### **Offering Prayer**

Lord we come before you in an increasingly complex world, in which forces beyond our control seem to be at work, in climate change, in continued war, in refugee problems, in pandemics – and we admit, Lord, we are not up to the task; we are humbled before such things and humbled before you, our maker. So we ask that your Spirit might be at work in our hearts and that the wisdom of your Kingdom of justice, peace and love might reach us, by the Spirit of the One we follow. – Lord, as we give of ourselves in these and all our gifts, shows us Christ and His Cross and make us wise

### **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.

### **BPW 641 'We turn to you, O God of every nation'**

#### **Prayers of intercession**

We are constrained, I think, to pray, today, for Afghanistan. I know there are other places - Syria, Yemen, Tigray province in Ethiopia; Myanmar – more besides. I know terrible things are happening in Xinjiang in China, still; Afghanistan. Let it stand for all, today, in our prayers

Not that it's easy to pray – nevertheless; we should, I think, *try* – we cannot *not* pray.

Lord hear us,

**Lord, graciously hear us**

We pray for the people of Afghanistan – bewildered boys and girls in school; parents fearing their homes being taken over by fighters; doctors, nurses, civil servants, trying to keep going with dwindling resources; politicians facing an uncertain future with little outside help; interpreters and others fearing reprisals; the bereaved unable to grieve properly; the injured and maimed awaiting the most rudimentary treatment – an increasing number of refugees.

Many more – people like us with little of what we take for granted. Lord, what we wish for ourselves we pray for them; security, freedom, health; economic stability; just the opportunity to live how we want and do what we want, with all the resources that are needed – oh that what we enjoy might be theirs

Lord hear us,

**Lord, graciously hear us**

We pray for those who are at work in Afghanistan. BMS World Mission; Christian Aid; Afghan Aid, Catholic Relief Services (CRS), USAID, Community World Service Asia (CWSA), and Norwegian Church Aid (NCA). People who are at work in hospitals, on farms, in homes, communities, churches –

many other places – people who have gone from places like ours to bring some of what we have to people like us; healthcare, better farming practises, water supply, business support. Lord, what we wish for ourselves we

pray for them - oh that what we take for granted might be seen in Afghanistan.

Lord hear us,  
**Lord, graciously hear us**

We pray for those who have served in Afghanistan who have achieved much, who now watch as much of what they have achieved is destroyed – military personnel in the US and here and from other countries; who lost friends, who were injured; who built buildings, administered organisations; created communities and developed systems

In many parts of the country. People who worked and, yes, fought, over many years are bound to look aghast at what's happening; the space for education, healthcare and *freedom* that their work provided is being reduced by the hour – one hears of depression and regret among such folk. Lord, what we have ourselves – oh, that what we *need* for our flourishing might be once again seen in Afghanistan.

Lord hear us,  
**Lord, graciously hear us**

Finally we pray for the Taleban and those who fight with them – men who know little except fighting and violence; who see everything through a narrow religious lens; who may yet achieve the overthrow of their country, but then what?

How will they govern? What alliances will they form? Will they be able to organise healthcare, education, economic activity? Will they be able to lay down arms and take up pens? Oh, that they might come to love peace

Lord hear us,  
**Lord, graciously hear us**

**BPW 521 'Be thou my vision'**

#### **Benediction**

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 and processing; Nick printing and posting; Rachel sorting music and playing with Ali and Dave, Tyndale singers singing; Martin playing the organ; Keith and Margaret reading; the Stewarding Team preparing, watching over us, and cleaning up after – thanks everyone for taking part.

We are beginning to look to the 'opening up' of aspect of the church's life, as well as more freedoms in the world around. So we continue to live by faith and, whatever lies ahead, we commit to supporting one another & living as those who would be wise in the things of God.