

Notices

Good morning and a very warm welcome to our worship here at Tyndale. If you are watching from home or indeed here with us, a regular attendee, or a visitor, we hope you will feel at home with us as we worship together.

This morning our service is being taken by our Community Minister Rachel Haig, and we thank her for leading our worship and look forward to sharing this time together.

On Tuesday at 11am, our usual zoom coffee shop will take place. Do join us if you are free, to catch up with one another, the joining details can be found on the website.

Also, as usual, we have our zoom coffee shop after this morning's service at 11.30 for those that are able to make it. Thank you.

Call to worship

Grace, mercy and peace from God our Father

and the Lord Jesus Christ, be with you

See what love the Father has given us,

ALL: that we should be called the children of God.

BPW 62 O Lord my God, when I in awesome wonder

Opening Prayer

Beyond us, and around us, you are maker of all and we offer you our worship for you are so much greater than we can think or imagine, yet as near to us as our breath, you know our deepest thoughts and feelings. All that we are is known to you, nothing is hidden and still it is love for us that is your first word to us. You have loved us from the beginning of our time and you will love us to the end of life.

In Jesus Christ you have made yourself known. In his life and death, we see you embrace our humanity and our fragility, in his life beyond death hope is born in us. And the same Spirit that was in Jesus, you have sent to us to help us, to guide us, to bring us your peace beyond our understanding.

We thank you for the ways in which we've known you in this past week, and we thank you that the week ahead will be filled with your presence. You already know what's in our hearts and minds today, our unbelief as well as our certainties. You know our fears and understand them, as well as our strengths which you are pleased with.

You have promised to share our journey and we confess our need of your Spirit's help, daily and we come here to grow in our faith.

You have tried to show us ways that lead to even greater peace. You have tried to share with us actions which speak of selfless love. And we thank you for the many ways our lives are made rich by the loving actions of others – for the care and support, the comfort and compassion we received.

We're sorry for the times when we fall into ways that are selfish, unkind, lacking in love towards our neighbours. Forgive us for the times we fail to see the needs of others or choose ways that separate us from those who are both near to us and far. Forgive us when we are less than you hope for and cannot see beyond our own desires.

So in this time together, help us to be present to you as you are present to us, as well as present to each other. Give us time and space to remember and to reflect, to tell you our worries and fears, to be reassured and reminded that you are God, our maker and are here with us, through your Son Jesus Christ our Lord, in whose name we pray.

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 On the Cross

Geoff Baker

Reading [1 Kings 8: 1,6,10-43](#)

Reading [Ephesians 6: 10-20](#)

Words of Offering

We pause in this moment to recognise the gifts we each bring to our common life, for our money, time and talents offered for the building of God's Kingdom through Tyndale and beyond.

So we share the grace with each other:

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

Song **Darkness like a shroud**

Reflection [From a distance](#)

Sermon **Hear in heaven**

From a distance the world is small, a tiny planet spinning in a vast universe, and the span of our life is, as I was reminded this week by someone I met at a funeral, so short. The bible constantly reminds us of both the fragility of human existence as well as the meaning of life that is to be found not in any 'things' we can accumulate to make our lives easier or to bring us pleasure but in our relationship to one another as human beings and to God our maker.

Solomon, the wisest of Kings according to the bible, who finally builds God a Temple worthy of the maker of heaven and earth. Was that wise? To try to capture God in a human made building? I guess the weight of expectation, the knowledge that his Father, David, passed this baton to him to complete, was heavy on Solomon. A monument to David's Kingship as much as a dwelling place for God.

Of course, royalty like their palaces. And homes are important to us all. And the idea of spaces where God is, that people can visit, that marks special places of prayer or ritual have been important since ancient times, when people set up stones in the wilderness to mark the spot where they received a revelation or an answer to prayer or a vision of heaven.

Solomon builds a temple fit for the most high. And then he prays this magnificent prayer that seems to enshrine the understanding that God is there but not contained. God is near but also far and wide, God is for them, but also against their waywardness and disobedience. Time and again Solomon cries out 'Hear in Heaven and act, Hear in Heaven and forgive, Hear in heaven your dwelling place, Hear in heaven their prayers.

The prayer is full of understanding of the journey that the people of God have made from slavery to freedom to choose their own destiny. From travelling nomads in a wilderness that claimed so many lives as they wandered unable to pluck up the courage to cross into a land full of promise to a people protected by a human king defending their territory against outside invaders, even invading other lands to widen their power and influence.

It is a strong prayer that reflects the vulnerability that is so much a part of our human condition. We do the very things which destroy and diminish, rather than choosing the things that bring life and Solomon prays over his people in full knowledge of their weakness and powerlessness even whilst he himself is neither weak nor powerless.

It's been a good week to hear these words about crying out to God to hear and act. We stand on the precipice looking over to Afghanistan with heavy hearts and confused minds. And it's not the only place we have looked on from afar and wept over. It's just the latest and seems a horror we can see unfolding. On the one hand what has all that war been for? For such a time as this was Solomon's prayer written. And we like Solomon, although without his wealth and power, are called to speak from the places like the temple, like this even,

built to remind people of God's presence and call on God to act, to hear us, to be the faithful, righteous, compassionate, sheltering, with us God that was promised.

We are starting from a different place to Solomon who already had his platform set up. Perhaps we are more like where the church in Ephesus was starting. More marginalised and with less power.

Paul was writing to the church in Ephesus surrounded by Temples to gods that have grown up around different philosophies and cultures. Ephesus is renowned for surviving multiple attacks and constantly changing hands as it was conquered. Not unlike what we see happening as the Taliban sweep through Afghanistan and what was people's everyday existence is changed overnight. Over time myriad ideas, rituals, religious practices, ways of worshipping are imposed, require servicing, leave their mark. In some senses, the Christian church was another new way introduced into Ephesus, although not with the political or military clout, just seeping through the Roman Empire, life by life, family by family, group by group, new churches beginning and growing and testifying to the same God in heaven that Solomon prayed to.

So when Paul writes about putting on the whole armour of God, he's taking on a culture, speaking against spiritual powers. We don't talk in those terms very much these days but it seems right to acknowledge those powers and the darkness they bring with them in these days. There's an oppression over the earth at the moment, a godlessness. Perhaps it's the natural outworkings of the human condition that has become so self interested that human power, human greed, self idolatry, our desire for wealth and our loss of connectedness and commonality are wreaking havoc, bringing chaos to the world near and far. We seem far more interested in building walls than building relationships.

Whilst the imagery Paul uses is less helpful in these days when Taliban fighters wave the arms that they have grabbed in what seems their nearly unopposed takeover, still we need to heed again ideas about truth, righteousness, faith, salvation, and with the word of God for our day, proclaim the gospel of peace. Paul says we must be ready when our day comes. And we need to pray. To pray like we have maybe never prayed before. Because if this is as much a spiritual battle then whether its Paul or Solomon, we are being challenged to cry out to God in heaven about the things we have no control over, the things that make us fearful for the future, the things which we know are harming God's children, our brothers and sisters in other lands and here at home. Our calling as the people of God is to exemplify what it means to be light bearers. Those that shine light, who hold onto the truth, who display the righteousness that comes from God, integrity, goodness, kindness - its to reflect the face of God. It would be to act because it's the right thing to do to save innocent people, not wait till its expedient and gain can be had in contracts for arms or oil or other ways in which rich countries have exploited the poorest as has happened so many times in the past. And it needs to be about acts not just words. When it says the word became flesh, it's the flesh that saves us, Jesus death on a cross that brings salvation to the world and defeats the power of death. It's the God who left heaven and made home here with us in the darkness until we violently cast him out again. Because human beings lean towards violence instead of peace. But our gospel is a gospel of peace according to Paul. Even though his imagery invokes armour. And we are to wrap ourselves around and care that truth and righteousness, faith and salvation are not forgotten, or ignored. Life by life, person by person, and its my job to do that, but its your too. No one who invokes the name of Jesus as their Saviour is exempt from the responsibility to make known this gospel, however much of a mystery it is, even to the likes of Paul.

We may be looking on from a distance, which for some makes it easy to ignore, or to look away from as if its none of our business. But it isn't far from our own doors. In fact there are those here today with us because they've escaped the kind of experiences we can only imagine as we see the news. It's at our doorstep.

Now is the time to cry out to God, Hear us in heaven and act. Hear us in heaven and forgive. Hear us in heaven and save.

For our neighbours, for our community, for our nation, for all God's children. Come Lord Jesus, graciously hear us and give us the strength we need to be light bearers for these days.

Song [Lord you hear the cry](#)

Geraldine Latty

Intercessions:

O God our maker, we your people turn to you and call for help.

Hear us in heaven as we cry out to you for the nation and people of Afghanistan.
Come Lord Jesus, graciously hear us **ALL: and give us the strength we need to be light bearers**

Hear us in Heaven as we cry out for the people of Hong Kong.
Come Lord Jesus, graciously hear us **and give us the strength we need to be light bearers**

Hear us in Heaven as we cry out to you for the people of Haiti.
Come Lord Jesus, graciously hear us **and give us the strength we need to be light bearers**

Hear us in Heaven as we cry out for the people of Plymouth.
Come Lord Jesus, graciously hear us **and give us the strength we need to be light bearers**

Hear us in Heaven as we cry out for those who have been affected by wildfires, floods, earthquakes and other natural disasters, who have lost loved ones, homes, livelihoods.
Come Lord Jesus, graciously hear us **and give us the strength we need to be light bearers**

Hear us in heaven as we cry out for those in our communities who are lonely, who are suffering with their mental health and wellbeing, who feel the constant craving of addiction, who have felt the sting of redundancy and unemployment, who have no place to call home.
Come Lord Jesus, graciously hear us **and give us the strength we need to be light bearers**

O God our maker, we your people, hear your cry for all your children and those we are called to serve and share life with. Bring your comfort and blessing to our loved ones, and those we haven't seen for a while. Give us your strength, and courage to face the challenges of these days. Give us wisdom and compassion that who we are will display your likeness and give witness to your presence and your love.
Come Lord Jesus, graciously hear us **and give us the strength we need to be light bearers**
Amen

BPW 65 Praise my soul the king of heaven

Blessing

The blessing of God, Father Son and Holy Spirit we with you now and remain with you always. Amen