

RYDE BAPTIST CHURCH SUNDAY SERVICE

25 October 2020—Bible Sunday

It is easy to assume that younger people will cope better with lockdown than those of us who are older but that is not necessarily so and there is a real concern that there will be an enormous wave of mental health problems once we are out of lockdown.

In the verses from Galatians quoted above Paul reminds us that we will harvest what we sow and if we sow to please our sinful nature we will reap destruction, whereas if we sow to please the Spirit we will reap eternal life. Paul then goes on to apply this to how we live in doing good to all people especially those who are our Christian brothers and sisters.

Application. How do we then apply this today? During lockdown I have on an irregular basis phoned a number of people to see how they are coping and Sally and I have really appreciated those of you who have contacted us by email or phone to see how we are doing. However, like all of us we would have appreciated more contact with people. Zoom is not my favourite way of keeping in touch with people, but it is an opportunity to do so and it is sad when folk have not availed themselves of this personal contact.

What saddens me most is that some members of RBC have chosen not to be involved in anything that has been provided, and have even been critical of what has been offered. That is not how

it should be as a family of believers!

This morning let us resolve to make personal contact by phone or email with someone in the church, or in our circle of family and friends with whom we have not spoken during lockdown to see how they are. I close with Paul's words to the Corinthian church:

'Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the LORD, because you know that your labour in the LORD is not in vain.'

[1 Corinthians 15:58]

SUGGESTED SONG

Love Divine

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jPsxqQsnzJA>

BLESSING

'May Christ dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.'

Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

<https://rydebaptist.xyz>

Dear Friends,

Today is the day that Bible Society marks as Bible Sunday, and it is a good day to give thanks to God for the gift of the Scriptures through which his Word comes to life in our lives. You will find links to various resources provided by Bible Society on today's Website page and on Facebook. There are a couple of great videos that can be viewed online. One of the really inspiring things to see is just what a difference the Bible makes to people's lives around the world, especially when they have it translated into their own languages. One of the really valuable things that we can do is to contribute towards the cost of Bible translation, as well as to pray for the communities and individuals who will receive them. Ways to do this are on Bible Society's website too.

The reading for Bible Society's reflection today is Nehemiah 8:1-12. The people of Israel had been reunited with their homes and then came together in the square by Jerusalem's Water Gate. It had been a long time since they had heard the words of the Bible, so they urged Ezra, the teacher of the Law, to bring out the Law of Moses—that is the first five books of our Bibles—and read

it to them. What they heard, they now understood, and it impacted them greatly because it was clear that they had strayed from the Lord in their personal lives and as a community. Such was their sadness and remorse that they wept and mourned bitterly, until instructed by the governor Nehemiah not to grieve for this was a good day, a day to celebrate, a holy day, for the Word of God had been restored to God's people.

The Bible is a very powerful book, because it is not just a book. Its words can be translated into different languages by Bible scholars, but the Holy Spirit translates it in the hearts and lives of all who read it so that it can be understood and transform their lives. In today's Sermon, Ian Pratt shares his testimony of how reading the Bible has recently challenged him and impacted his life, and challenges us to read and put the words of the Bible into action in our lives, in a practical and manageable way. We are reminded again of the greatest commandment, which is to love God with all our heart, soul and mind; and to love our neighbour as ourselves. We don't read the Bible as an academic exercise, or for its own sake, but so that it will transform us into people who love God and others in precisely this way.

Zoom is the safest way for most people to meet during this time, and will continue to be the main way we will meet for some time to come. Our Zoom Sunday Service is at 10.30am today and our Zoom Monday Prayer Meeting is at 7.00pm tomorrow. If you are able to join us, you will be very welcome. The Zoom links will be sent to those who have signed up to receive them. If you are reading this sheet on your computer or device you can also click on the readings and songs. There is lots more information on our website which you can find at <https://rydebaptist.xyz>

CALL TO WORSHIP

‘Amen! Amen!... This day is holy to the Lord your God. Do not mourn or weep... This day is holy to our Lord. Do not grieve, for the joy of the Lord is your strength... Be still for this is a holy day. Do not grieve.’ (Nehemiah 12:6,9-11)

BIBLE READINGS

[Nehemiah 8:1-12](#)

[Matthew 22:34-46](#)

[Galatians 6:1-10](#)

SUGGESTED SONGS

Give Thanks With A Grateful Heart
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k9uZl4w4xgM>

King Of Kings, Majesty
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HGnpgYqwO8k>

PRAYER

Father God, on this Bible Sunday we thank you for the gift of the Bible, the Scriptures which bring to life your Word in this world and in our lives, by the inspiration and power of your Holy Spirit. Help us as we read the Bible, not just to read its words, but to meditate, to understand, to inwardly digest and to put into practice all that we see and learn. We thank you for the Word made flesh in the person of our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who was with you and the Holy Spirit from the very beginning, One God and Lord of all. We pray for all those working to translate the Bible into different languages, and also those who take the stories and teaching of the Bible into different communities around the world. In Jesus' name, Amen.

SUGGESTED SONG

Jesus, Be The Centre
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pw6rIwmkV6E>

MINI-SERMON OUTLINE

Introduction. When we read the Bible, do we expect God to speak specifically to us or not? Bible reading has been a part of my [Ian's] daily routine for many years now. Sometimes I read the Bible out of duty and nothing much seems to be relevant to me, but at other times it as if the words leap out of the page to me and say "this is specially or specifically for you!"

I do not know about you, but I have found lockdown very difficult in a number of areas. I have struggled with boredom and lack of purpose, and there has been a sameness about each day and each week. In August, Sally and I decided we would try to swim in the sea every day and we really enjoyed that, and I have been taking thousands of photographs. However, with all the turmoil in the world with the pandemic and the various political messes on an almost daily basis, it is easy to become depressed. There appears to be so much evil and selfishness in the world which goes unchecked.

Therefore, when I recently read Galatians 6:7-10 the verses impacted me greatly:

‘Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. Whoever sows to please their flesh, from the flesh will reap destruction; whoever sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life. Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.’

Exposition. On a personal level this was both a warning and an encouragement. It was a warning that how I live my life has eternal consequences either for good or for bad. (Behaviour need not be

overtly bad to lead to destruction, but any selfish behaviour leads to destruction.) It was also an encouragement not to give up on doing good to the Christian family and others, as there will be a harvest in due course. It was also an encouragement to know that eventually there will be a harvest time or day of accounting when evil will be finally dealt with.

Sometimes, I am sure that all of us act as if God does not see what we are doing. It is as if he is deaf when we tell lies, or he cannot see when we behave badly towards other people. The truth is that God sees and hears everything, even our hidden thoughts. Most, if not all of us, would be totally ashamed if our thoughts each day were projected onto a giant screen for all to see! I know I certainly would.

I have a continuing chat thread with my three sons on WhatsApp on my smartphone, and we talk about football, Christian worship, personal struggles, and all sorts of other things. I have tried to be honest with them about my own struggles and they have gradually shared some of theirs. My youngest son Josh and I have an hour or so each Saturday morning chatting on the phone and I encourage others of you who have children to keep the lines of communication wide open on a regular basis, particularly during this time of restriction on meeting people.