

RYDE BAPTIST CHURCH SUNDAY SERVICE

15 November 2020

temptations we are experiencing. That is not so—Jesus was tempted in every way like us but without sinning. However, Jesus is not just someone who is perfect and who then leaves us to cope on our own. He knows what it is to be tempted and is always ready to be merciful to us and to give us the grace that we need in times of need.

Who has heard of the Japanese word *Kintsugi*? It is a technique whereby broken porcelain is visibly repaired with gold: see <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kintsugi>

Fashion designers in the Netherlands have collaborated in mending clothes in ways that highlight the mending work rather than trying to mask it. As the clothing is remade, the repair becomes ornamental: a golden scar. Articles of clothing are transformed in ways that highlight the places where they were torn or frayed.

Perhaps this is what Paul meant when he said he would boast of things that show his weakness. (2 Corinthians 11:30)

In our lives we each have experiences that make us torn or frayed. Are we going to let God use us by repairing those tears and frayed areas with His golden threads? Then we can boast of our weaknesses because God has used them for His purposes? Do you have any golden scars as a Christian?

Application. I have met people in life who are paralysed by previous failures in various areas. Sometimes, there are people in church like this who dare not step out for God for fear of making a mistake or getting something wrong. I want to encourage each of us today to step out in faith knowing that if we fail or fall Jesus is there to give mercy and grace in our time of need. We want the damaged areas of our lives to be repaired with God's golden threads so that to His glory we may be something beautiful for Him.

SUGGESTED SONG

My Lighthouse
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HA8VtUPgqTc>

BLESSING

Now may our God and Father himself and our LORD Jesus clear the way for us to come to you. May the LORD make your love increase and overflow for each other and for everyone else, just as ours does for you. May he strengthen your hearts so that you will be blameless and holy in the presence of our God and Father when our LORD Jesus comes with all his holy ones. Amen.

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

<https://rydebaptist.xyz>

Dear Friends,

Well, for many of us this last week wasn't as bad as we had anticipated. There was more sunshine than had been forecast, and the News contained glimmers of hope for a new vaccine and political change on either side of the pond. In the maze of life, as usual, we see new paths and possibilities as we round the corner and head off in a slightly different direction, although aiming for the same destination. It is too early to predict precisely what shape Christmas will take yet, but when Advent arrives in a fortnight's time we will be able to plan and prepare our celebrations as we should, slowly and gradually, building up the anticipation for the arrival of the day itself. All things in their right and proper time. There is no need to follow the advice of the latest popular celebrity and put up our decorations too soon. The light shines most brightly in the darkness, and Winter has not yet come.

Psalm 90 is traditionally attributed to Moses, one of the flawed but called characters that Ian Pratt talks about later in our service. Moses sees everything having their place in God's plan and acknowledges that even as his people have endured the privations of the

wilderness for forty years, never settling in one location for very long, yet throughout the many generations God has been their dwelling-place, God has been the one everlasting constant.

Much of the portion of the Psalm we read this morning concerns God's wrath for the sinfulness of the people, and the punishment for their travail—it would not normally take forty years to get from Egypt to Canaan. Yet God wasn't just rescuing his people, he was also moulding them as a kingdom community for his purposes.

The darkness or the wilderness, however long they may seem to us, do not last forever. And in the grand scheme of things, as Moses reflects, 'A thousand years in your sight are like a day that has just gone by, or like a watch in the night.' The purpose of our worship, our prayer, our study of the Bible, our fellowship as Christian believers, our witness and service together, is that we grow as living active disciples of Jesus, moulded into his kingdom community for his purposes in the same way. As in the wilderness of old, it remains to be seen who will remain connected and committed right up to that time when we will enter into the Promised Land.

Zoom is the safest way for most people to meet at this time and will continue to be the main way that we will be able to meet for a little while yet. Our Zoom Sunday Service is at 10.30am today; our Zoom Prayer Meeting is at 7.00pm on Monday. 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

Lord, you have been our dwelling-place throughout all generations. Before the mountains were born or you brought forth the whole world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God... Teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom. (Psalm 90:1-2,12)

BIBLE READINGS

[Psalm 90:1-12](#)

[Matthew 25:14-30](#)

[Hebrews 4:11-16](#)

SUGGESTED SONGS

Love Divine All Loves Excelling
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JGGcqhKShQ8>

Our Father
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UYsKy0ABLtA>

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, thank you for this new day full of opportunities. The days may be shorter, and the nights longer and darker, but the light of your love shines as brightly as ever and the darkness means that we can see it more clearly. We thank you that even as Autumn prepares to make way for Winter, we can see signs of the coming Spring—the green tips of bulbs in the ground and the tight buds at the end of branches. Help us during this different and challenging time to see through the gloom and its difficulties towards the many ways that you are bringing life and hope, and help us to find ways that we can participate in this joyful task. Amen.

TO PONDER

Matthew 25:14-30 is the familiar Parable of the Talents. As you read and pray through it again, ask God to reveal to you those gifts and talents that you may have been given but that you have ‘dug a hole in the ground and hidden’. We may not think we have been given many gifts, but all of them have been given to us by God to be used for his purposes.

SUGGESTED SONG

Lord Reign In Me (Over All The Earth)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BeHCyLdKQsY>

We are grateful to **Ian Pratt** who has prepared the following thoughts and reflections for us this morning.

MINI-SERMON OUTLINE

How God uses flawed people.

Introduction. People outside the church are often hyper-critical about those of us in the church. They expect Christians to be perfect, and any example of wrongful behaviour by us is used to justify non-believers in rejecting the truths of Christianity. The truth is that whether we are Christians or not, we are all flawed humans with underlying weaknesses or faults. That is not to excuse sinful behaviour but to be realistic that we live in a fallen world.

Last year I preached on Gideon who was such an individual and I described him as a man of faith with feet of clay. Many of the Bible’s heroes have major character flaws and I outlined some last year, for example:

Abraham, the forefather of faith, let other men walk off with his wife on two different occasions. (Genesis 12 and 20)

Sarah, the most gorgeous woman by popular opinion, let her husband sleep with another woman and then hated her for it. (Genesis 16)

Moses, the humblest man on the face of the earth (Numbers 12:13), had a very serious problem with his temper. (Exodus 2, 32:19; Numbers 20:11)

Samson, who puts Arnold Schwarzenegger to shame, was hopelessly enmeshed with a disloyal wife—and ended up tak-

ing his own life. (Judges 16)

Saul, the first and powerful king of Israel, was apparently a psychotic with manic bursts of anger, episodes of deep depression and traces of paranoia, too. He committed suicide. (1 Samuel 16, 18, 19, 31)

David, the friend of God, concealed his adultery with a murder. (2 Samuel 11)

Solomon, the wisest man in the world, was arguably the world’s greatest sex addict with 1,000 sexual partners. (1 Kings 11)

That is what I like about the Bible: its realism, and its honesty.

Exposition. Let us look at the passage from Hebrews chapter 4. The writer of this letter encourages us to look to Jesus as our example, role model and mentor. Verses 14-16 are so encouraging.

¹⁴Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has ascended into heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. ¹⁵For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin. ¹⁶Let us then approach God’s throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

Perhaps we sometimes feel that Jesus does not understand the difficulties or