

RYDE BAPTIST CHURCH SUNDAY SERVICE

11 April 2021

Dear Friends,

The period after Easter is usually my favourite time of the year, when everything seems to be bursting back into life. In the traditional church calendar Easter continues on until we reach Ascension and Pentecost. In reality though we celebrate Easter every week of the year, because our worship together on a Sunday recognises the first day of the week, the day of resurrection and life, rather than Shabbat, the day of rest. If you mistakenly believed that Sunday was to be the day of rest, please don't add to the error by saying it to anyone actively working in church life for whom it usually is the busiest day.

The rhythm of work and rest, life and sleep, is an important one. We see this pattern established in creation, when God worked for six days and rested on the seventh. I have a great distrust of calendars and diaries that put the 'weekend' at the end of the week, when Sunday is day one and Saturday is day seven. These days form the brackets around the week, that begins working in partnership with God and only ends in rest when the working week has been completed. It is especially important that the day of worship, the day of resurrection, is the first working day.

Christian worship in the light of the resurrection is active and participative. Our full worship merely begins when we gather, in whatever way, on the Lord's Day, and continues for the rest of the week. Work is what we do when we are awake, whilst rest is something that is more conducive to sleep. It is significant that the apostle

Paul, whilst talking about living in the light rather than darkness, and developing the fruits of light (goodness, righteousness and truth), gives this powerful invitation [Ephesians 5:14]:

“Wake up, sleeper,
rise from the dead,
and Christ will shine on you.”

Living in the light is a powerful reminder that although faith is personal it is not private. Faith can be seen and is to be demonstrated. It is not about relaxation, therapy, or rest. It is about healing, renewal, restoration, resurrection. It is not passive but active. In his charge to the Ephesians Paul outlines the 'fruitless deeds of darkness' and emphasises that our mission is to 'expose them'. He continues [Ephesians 5:18-21]:

'Instead, be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another with psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit. Sing and make music from your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Submit to one another out of reverence to Christ.'

The main reason we long to be able to meet together on a Sunday once again, is not so that we can just sit and listen to sermons, sing familiar songs, or pray for the world, beneficial things though these may be. The main reason is so that we can continue to develop good relationships with one another, publicly and accountably, and share together the real work of worship, mission, testimony, evangelism, and sharing the good news of the risen Jesus.

Our Sunday worship service is just one small part of the spiritual life of Ryde Baptist Church. We are still not all able to safely gather in our building, so Zoom is the securest way for most people to meet at this time. It is not the same, but it fulfils an important purpose for the duration. Our Zoom Sunday Service is at 10.30am today. Services take a variety of forms and contents, and on the second Sunday of the month usually includes communion. On the fourth Sunday at 7pm we join with other Ryde churches. Our main weekly prayer meeting takes place on Monday evenings from 7pm, which is a really powerful and meaningful time in our life together. If you want to spend time praying with brothers and sisters in fellowship, this is the place to come. Regular Home Groups and other Courses - such as 'The Prayer Course' that we have been running during Lent - are very important for growing in discipleship and fellowship together. Of course, at the moment all these things take place using Zoom. The Zoom links will be sent to those who have signed up to receive them. If you'd like us to send you the links, please let us know. If you are reading this sheet on your computer or device you can click on the the readings and songs. There is more information on our website at <https://rydebaptist.xyz>

BIBLE READINGS

[Psalm 133](#)

[Mark 3:13-30](#)

[John 17:20-26](#)

[Romans 12:9-21](#)

CALL TO WORSHIP

How good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in unity!
[Psalm 133:1]

SONGS

[Love Divine](#)

[There Is A Redeemer](#)

PRAYER

There are many resources to help us in our prayers, day by day, week by week. It is good to keep lists of family and friends to pray for. Lots of Christian organisations produce prayer diaries. Daily news and current affairs programmes and websites are also a good source of information and inspiration for prayer.

While we cannot share personal information for prayer in the way that some people might like, growing friendships and relationships within the church family enables us to meaningfully pray for each other regularly. We are blessed with telephones, so if we want to know how to pray for each other we are each only a phone call away.

This is the day that the Lord has made.

Let us rejoice and be glad in it.

We will not offer to God
Offerings that cost us nothing.

Spirit of God, brooding over the waters of our chaos, inspire us to generous living.

Wind of God, dancing over the desert of our reluctance, lead us to the oasis of celebration.

Breath of God, inspiring communication among strangers, make us channels of your peace,

that we may give in deep thankfulness, placing the overflowing basket of our gifts on the table of rejoicing.

[Kate McIlhagga]

Lord, come to me, my door is open.

[Michel Quoist]

'In the same way the Spirit also comes to help us, weak as we are. For we do not know how we ought to pray; the Spirit himself pleads with God for us in groans that words cannot express. And God, who sees into our hearts, knows what the thought of the Spirit is; because the Spirit pleads with God on behalf of his people and in accordance with his will.'

[Romans 8:26-27]

SONGS

I Need Thee Every Hour

Speak O Lord

Many thanks to Ian Pratt who has chosen our songs and prepared our mini-sermon outline for today.

MINI-SERMON OUTLINE

Introduction

In Matthew 12, Jesus heals a blind and dumb demon-possessed man. The Scribes and Pharisees maintain that the only reason Jesus can do this is because he is in league himself with Beelzebul, the prince of demons.

In the parallel passage in Mark, Jesus's response is that "if a house is divided against itself, that house will not be able to stand."
[Mark 3:25]

Today, I want us to look at the issue of unity within the church in general, and in Ryde Baptist church in particular.

Exposition

A local church is like a large family in which there are various different kinds of people. When we join a church we find ourselves meeting with some people we naturally get on with, and others whom we find quite different from ourselves. Some people we will automatically be drawn to and others we will keep at arm's

length. Some people will annoy us intensely, whereas others will become life-long friends.

However, if, just like any other group of people drawn together by a common interest like a bridge club, a camera club, a poetry group or gardening club where there are some members you like and others you don't, the church is no different, what have we to offer the watching world? We need to be radically different.

My sister-in-law and her husband live in Norfolk and are involved with a church which is part of a group which goes under the title of Relational Mission. What does that mean?

I quote from the back of a book written by one of the church's leaders.

"What would the church be like if.....

Everyone committed to pray together, and everyone committed to share the gospel together?

It was marked by deep, genuine and lasting friendships, and was a place marked by a love for a broken world?

It equipped the next generation and gave itself to starting more churches?"

Psalm 133 speaks of the blessings of unity. "Behold, how good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity!"

Romans 12:18 says "If possible, so far as it depends upon you, live peaceably with all."

As Christians we have no freedom to fall out with other Christian brothers and sisters. The apostle Paul writes to the Ephesian church as follows:

"I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all hu-

mility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.” [Ephesians 4:1-3]

Our relationships with each other should be marked by deep and sacrificial love, forbearance, and compassion. We must make every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit.

I am aware that amongst those reading this today, there are a number of relationships where there is no unity, and where there is no love as there should be. Some people are holding grudges from the past when things did not go as they would have hoped. Some are critical of the leadership team in the church and have not engaged with the new ways of doing church and meeting for prayer. Some of us have struggled to love other brothers and sisters.

If the church, our church, is just like any other group of people with cliques, in groups, resentments, hostility and disagreement, we have nothing to offer to the watching world.

This mini-sermon was prepared by me very early one morning from 04.00 when I could not sleep and various thoughts were going around my head.

I passionately believe that God wants to bless RBC but is held back by disunity amongst us. Each of us needs to look into our own heart and ask God if there is some relationship I need to put right?

Application

I want to make the application very practical.

Is there someone in Ryde Baptist church with whom you need to be reconciled?

Perhaps a phone call is all that is necessary.

Is there someone about whom you have had unloving thoughts and you need to ask God for forgiveness for those thoughts? Don't delay in bringing this to God.

Are you doing all in your power to live peaceably with others in the church? Are you praying regularly for Kerry and the deacons and other brothers and sisters?

Let us pray.

PRAYER

Creator God, thank you that there is nowhere I can go that is beyond your presence. In your presence, I am blessed beyond measure.

You have said that you will never leave me or forsake me, you are always with me.

May I live a life of thanksgiving and worship in your presence.

Hear my prayer and fill my heart and my mouth with praise to you for your good gifts.

May your love be the passion in my heart. May your joy be my strength when times are hard.

May your presence be my peace that overflows. Through Jesus Christ, our Lord, Amen.

SONG

[The Servant King](#)

BLESSING

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>