

# RYDE BAPTIST CHURCH SUNDAY SERVICE

## 18 April 2021

Dear Friends,

One of the remarkable things we learn about human beings from the beginning of the Bible is that we are made 'in the image of God'. [Genesis 1:26-27] There have of course been lots of discussions and reflections about what it means to be created in God's likeness or image. In the Genesis account the man and woman are made on the sixth day as the last act of creation before God rested on the following or seventh day. We looked at this last week. Human beings are a result of God's work, his word, his breath. The most appropriate human response to this reality is to worship God. The context of human origins and identity is the whole of creation, all that God has created, and our purpose is to worship God. But how do we do this?

A clear part of what it means to be made in God's image is that we are intended to be creative beings ourselves. Creativity takes many different forms, and the original creation accounts reflect this. But in essence creativity is about bringing something into being that didn't previously exist. Genesis tells us that when God created the heavens and the earth 'the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep' [1:2], although the traditional doctrine of *creatio ex nihilo* (creation from nothing) is not conclusively supported by the Bible. If you start wondering where things came from before there were things, it can become quite mind boggling. Yet, using our imaginations and the available resources God has given us, we can be creative as God intends.

You may be among the small proportion of people who claim that they haven't got a creative bone in them. This is clearly untrue, as creativity is built so deeply into the human DNA. If we are serious about it, it doesn't take long to discover where our particular area(s) of creativity lies. Discovering our unique creativity and putting it to use as God made us to, is an essential component of worship.

Last week we stated that worship is not passive but active, that worship is work. It follows then, that worship is also creative. We are instructed that 'whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.' [Colossians 3:17] There has long been a struggle between those who insist on continuing old traditional forms of Sunday worship and those wanting to be more experimental, innovative, contemporary, and dare we say 'creative'. Given that we live in the present and travel into the future, this shouldn't really be an issue any more. A much more fundamental question is how we understand worship as primarily not what we do on The Lord's Day (although we start it then) but what we continue doing throughout the working week!

This last year of pandemic life has given rise to an enormous amount of additional creativity, as people have discovered new gifts and skills. Let us pray that in the months ahead, as we are once again able to meet up and begin doing things together, that we will discover the creativity that matches the new era before us.

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 4:1-8](#)

[Luke 24:13-32](#)

[Luke 24:33-48](#)

[Acts 3:12-20](#)

## **CALL TO WORSHIP**

Answer me when I call to you, my righteous God. Give me relief from my distress; have mercy on me and hear my prayer.

How long will you people turn my glory into shame? How long will you love delusions and seek false gods?

Know that the Lord has set apart his faithful servant for himself; the Lord hears when I call him. [*Psalm 4:1-3*]

## **SONGS**

[Praise My Soul The King Of Heaven](#)

[O Praise The Name](#)

## **FOR REFLECTION**

Tremble and do not sin; when you are on your beds, search your hearts and be silent. Offer the sacrifices of the righteous and trust in the Lord. [*Psalm 4:4-5*]

## **PRAYERS**

Almighty God,  
to whom all hearts are open,  
all desires known,  
and from whom no secrets are hidden:  
cleanse the thoughts of our hearts  
by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit,  
that we may perfectly love you,  
and worthily magnify your holy name;  
through Christ our Lord.

Your death, O Lord, we commemorate.  
Your resurrection we confess.  
Your final coming we await.  
Glory be to you, O Christ.  
*Christ has died.*  
*Christ is risen.*  
*Christ will come again.*

Almighty God,  
We thank you for feeding us with the  
body and blood of your Son Jesus Christ.  
Through him we offer you our souls and  
bodies to be a living sacrifice.  
Send us out in the power of your Spirit  
to live and work  
to your praise and glory.

## SONGS

The Power Of Your Love

Mighty To Save

### MINI-SERMON OUTLINE

**Shine Upon Us.** Psalm 4:6 includes the prayer, 'Let the light of your face shine upon us.' This is David's prayer, remembering that he has suffered disgrace and shame [v2] and the people do not look on him as a model of faithfulness, yet God has chosen David as his servant and he has God's ear [v3]. We rightly think of the face of God being too much for human beings to behold, and we remember Moses' face shining brightly when he came from God's direct presence and needing to be covered [Exodus 34:29-35]. We know just a little of what this is like if we ourselves spend too much time out in the sun or wind without sunscreen or protection, although really it is very different. Photography was discovered by experimenting with how the power of the sun affected different materials and chemicals to leave an image impression. How much more the effect of being in the direct presence of God could be. God by his grace invites whom he wishes into his close presence. Looking at Jesus we see the reflection of our Heavenly Father, and God comes and meets directly with whom he wishes. We read of God visiting Abraham, his several meetings with Moses (through a burning bush, on Sinai, etc.) the visions of Isaiah, Daniel and others. Those who see God see him in all his glory and the light of his glory shines on them and illuminates who and what they are. So David's prayer, 'Let the light of your face shine upon us' is a brave prayer for it will show David clearly, warts and all. Yet David also knows the gracious, healing, restoring face of the Father too.

**The Light of Recognition.** Light is powerful energy. Ultimately all the power and energy that sustains life on planet earth comes from the sun. Ultimately all the power and energy that truly sustains our relationships with God and each other comes from who Jesus is and what he has done for us. God is love. We love because he first loved. Jesus most fully demonstrates God's love. Without that love we are angry and estranged from God, from each other and from ourselves. To know God is to come to a fuller understanding of ourselves. In our reading from Luke 24:13-48 we encounter the word 'recognise' several times. When Jesus walked with the two disciples to Emmaus initially 'they were kept from recognising him'. [v16] Later when Jesus sat at the table, took bread, broke it and began to give it to them, 'their eyes were opened and they recognised him'. [v31] Finally the two disciples returned to Jerusalem to tell the apostles and the others what had happened to them, 'and how Jesus was recognised by them when he broke the bread.' [v35] If we need a powerful example of why Jesus commanded his disciples at his Last Supper to break bread and to do this in remembrance of him, then this is it. As we break bread Jesus is remembered. That which is otherwise hidden from our eyes is recognised. The word 'recognise' in English (as in Greek) has two parts: 're-cognise'. 'Re' appears at the front of many words (e.g. refocus, resale, reinvigorate, etc.) and simply means to do it again, to repeat it. 'Cognise' is connected to the Greek word *gnosis* which means 'knowledge' but also has to do with the mind and thinking, so we might talk about someones cognitive ability. Recognition is that moment of knowing something or someone again, like the first time over.

**Witnesses To The Light.** Communion is a truly powerful moment of recognising who Jesus is and what he has done, of remembering Jesus as he has commanded us to do. This simple meal of bread and wine is so much more as we obey Jesus. It is known by many names: 'Communion' emphasises the relationships we have with God and the others with whom we share the meal. 'Eucharist' simply means 'thanksgiving', reflecting the traditional prayers of thanksgiving given at the Passover meal, transformed into a thanksgiving for the cross and the empty tomb. Often the meal is simply known as 'The Lord's Supper' echoing 'The Last Supper' where Jesus initiated the sacred meal. There is significance in each of the names. Each reminds us that breaking bread with Jesus isn't something that is private, hidden, for our own benefit and indulgence. (To see how this line of thinking goes wrong very quickly in the early church look at 1 Corinthians 11:17-34.) There is a reason and a purpose to breaking bread with Jesus. A clue to this comes in Luke 24:48, 'You are witnesses of these things.' As a sacrament or as an ordinance (something which is sacred or something that has been ordained or instructed, a discussion that we can leave for another time) Communion is something that is to be practised, celebrated, re-enacted, regularly precisely because it shines a light on the glory of God demonstrated by the obedience of Jesus. Like a starter motor is there to reignite the engine, like a flint or match is there to reignite the fire, so breaking bread is there to relight the fire of faith, to energise the spark of recognition that brings back to life the passion of first love, Jesus. 'You are witnesses of these things' – we are witnesses of these things, that Jesus died and rose again on

the third day, and that repentance and forgiveness are to be preached from the rooftops wherever God has called us to be.

**Jesus Was Recognised.** If we truly recognise Jesus as he stands among us, breaking bread, equipping and empowering us, then we will be his witnesses. Those who have seen the risen Jesus cannot help but share the news with all around them, no matter how incredulous they may seem.

## SONG

Guide Me O Thou Great Jehovah

## BLESSING

Many, Lord, are asking, 'Who will bring us prosperity?' Let the light of your face shine on us. Fill my heart with joy when their grain and new wine abound. In peace I will lie down and sleep, for you alone, Lord, make me dwell in safety. [Psalm 4:6-8]

Love with all sincerity;  
hate what is evil;  
cling to what is good;  
be joyful in hope,  
patient in affliction,  
faithful in prayer.  
Bless those who persecute you;  
bless and do not curse.  
Rejoice with those who rejoice  
and mourn with those who mourn.  
Live in harmony with one another.  
Do not repay anyone evil for evil.  
And the blessing of God,  
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,  
be with you all.

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.

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