

RYDE BAPTIST CHURCH SUNDAY SERVICE

25 April 2021

Dear Friends,

The three weeks since Easter seem to have flown by really quickly, and they have witnessed some amazing events. The up-take of the Covid-19 vaccinations has continued to rise despite a few minor hiccups as people are taking care to protect their families, communities and themselves. Then the death and funeral of HRH Prince Philip the Duke of Edinburgh attracted huge audiences and a show of love and great support for Her Majesty The Queen. This week has seen the rise and fall in football of a proposed European Super League championed by greed but foiled by local fans and national politicians and celebrities committed to protect the nature and culture of British soccer.

What many of these things show is that the need to belong is still present and can be stirred to action when necessary. This can be really positive when it creates community cohesion. There is nothing wrong with being patriotic, with celebrating what is best, with putting others before ourselves and taking care of relationships. Yet it can also be exploited by those seeking to use it for their own promotion or power. 'Tribal loyalty', one way this dynamic is described, can be stirred up or whipped into aggressive nationalism. Very quickly this can get out of hand.

Just a month ago we all had to fill in our 2021 Census returns, and we may have had to think carefully about our identity for the first time since Brexit. Are we European any more? But also do we see ourselves as British, or English, or as

whatever our place of birth may have been? There may be a technically correct answer to the question, but where do we really feel our loyalties truly lie? Sadly, Caulkhead and Overner weren't acceptable options on the form!

As Christians we are challenged not to engage in the way that the world sees national borders and boundaries. Our citizenship is in heaven [*Philippians 3:20*] which means that our earthly status is both temporary and transient. It was the Roman philosopher Pliny the Elder who said "Home is where the heart is", but that can of course be anywhere. The Apostle Peter reminds us that all of us live where we do 'as foreigners and exiles', and he therefore exhorts us to 'live such good lives' among neighbours, colleagues and friends, that 'they may see (y)our good deeds and glorify God!' [*1 Peter 2:11-12*]

It can be tempting to be so caught up in local or national politics, so wrapped up in the rhetoric and trappings of national or local civic pride, that we forget where our first allegiance lies. When we confess that Jesus is Lord we confess that all other authorities are less than his and bow their knees to him. We submit to human authority so that we may be free of accusation, that we may be seen as sinless, but we live as free citizens of God's kingdom.

Whether Caulkhead or Overner we are all migrants and temporary residents who 'eagerly await' our heavenly king. This is our temporary home, and this affects how we live as tenant stewards and how we care for those who live here with us too.

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 Bible Course' that we are running on Thursdays - 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 39:1-13](#)

[Matthew 7:7-23](#)

[1 Peter 2:9-17](#)

CALL TO WORSHIP

'Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to

the one who knocks, the door will be opened. Which of you, if your son asks for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him! So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets.' [*Matthew 7:7-12*]

SONGS

[Come People Of The Risen King](#)

[Just As I Am](#)

FOR REFLECTION

We won't find the words 'immigrant' or 'refugee' in our Bibles, but we will find equivalent words such as 'strangers', 'foreigners' or 'sojourners'. These words refer to people of other ethnic and national origins who settled among the Jews in Israel, and the teaching of God in the Bible about how they are to be treated guides us in our responses and welcome to those who come to live and make their homes among us, for whatever reason.

The Law of God is clear: "When a foreigner resides among you in your land, do not ill-treat them. The foreigner among you must be treated as your native-born. Love them as yourself, for you were foreigners in Egypt. [*Leviticus 19:33-34*]

Jesus sums up a lot of his teaching using pithy sayings or proverbs. One such saying is found in cultures and religions around the world, and is often referred to as The Golden Rule:

"So in everything, do to others what you would have them do for you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets." [*Matt 7:12*]

Spend some time looking at and reflecting on some of the Bible passages that refer to this issue: Ruth 2:10; Matthew 25:35; Genesis 18:1-15; Exodus 23:9; Numbers 35:15; Deuteronomy 14:28-29, 16:14, 26:11; Leviticus 23:22, 25:35, etc. Notice that settlers are to be treated with respect, given refuge, welcomed at festivals and celebrations, and their needs met.

The writer of the letter to the Hebrews urges the early church to “Keep on loving one another as brothers and sisters. Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for by so doing some people have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it.”

Jesus asked the most pertinent question of all, in the passage made famous by the song “When I needed a neighbour, were you there?” [*Matthew 25:31-46*]

PRAYERS

“Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was ill and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me... Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.” [*Matt 25:34-36,40*]

O God, when in Jesus you walked this earth, you had no place to call your own, no place to lay your head. As we stand by the landless and homeless and support those who struggle alongside them, may we stand by you, seeing your face and image there. [*Barbara Vellacott*]

O God, you bring hope out of emptiness,

energy out of fear, new life out of grief and loss. As Mary returned to mourn yet found unspeakable joy, so comfort all who have lost their homes through persecution, war, exile, or deliberate destruction. Give them security, a place to live, and neighbours they trust to be, with them, a new sign of peace to the world. [*Janet Morley, Christian Aid*]

We cannot pray for those who suffer without being conscious of our own part of that suffering. Lord, as we watch and listen to events unfolding in the world, we know our own failure as a nation and community of nations to prevent the violence and injustice and forced expulsion inflicted on so many of our human family. Bring us to the point where we demand of our leaders higher standards of peace and justice and care for others, and a spirit of welcome and hospitality in setting policy and practices. Give us a heart for those without a place to call home; may they find a home among us. Amen.

SONGS

[His Mercy Is More](#)

[Faithful One](#)

This morning we welcome Andrew Berry who comes to share with us on Zoom at 10.30am and has provided the following notes. Andrew is Leader of OM Outreach, working with immigrant communities in the UK.

TALK OUTLINE

Operation Mobilisation

Many know of OM because of George Verwer, our founder over 60 years ago, who is still inspiring and speaking with the aim of mobilising people to join God in His mission to redeem his world through His

Son – our Lord Jesus Christ.

Others know OM for its several different ships over the years: Logos, Doulos, Logos 2, and now Logos Hope. Through their ministry, thousands have had the first taste of world mission and hundreds of thousands have heard the gospel in a relative manner.

Our short-term outreaches and 1-2 year training programmes around the world were pioneered in the 60's, 70's and 80's across Europe, and since then many other groups doing similar programmes have sprung up and made the opportunity to be involved in cross cultural mission a reality for local churches and believers.

We have not stood still, as even in the UK about 6 million people (a tenth of the population) are peoples who have made their homes here and have often become citizens, but come from language and cultural and religious groups in which there are insignificant numbers of Jesus followers, let alone a genuine community of growing believers.

In the Midlands (and London) we are working among refugees and asylum seekers, to meet some of their earthly needs and in the midst of that to bring the gospel to them. We are actively seeking to engage the 'rough sleepers' and in addition have significant work amongst other cultural groups (Iraqi, Urdu, Sikh, Syrian, Arab, Ethiopian, Turks), as well as the working class under-reached poor.

One of the more exciting stories, besides all the ongoing hard work of proclaiming the gospel faithfully and consistently, is of Mahdi who came to the country in 2012 as an asylum seeker. A sincere Muslim from Afghanistan, he became a Christian, has done some Bible training in 'Farsi, and is

now involved in evangelism and one-on-one discipling of Afghans through our media ministry in that language.

PRAYER

Lord, today we lift up to you the work of Operation Mobilisation. We thank you for over sixty years of witness and mission, declaring the Good News of Jesus and bringing light, life and hope, in practical and spiritual ways, into people's lives. We particularly thank you and pray for those whose faith has been encouraged and built up as they have gone with you, for short or long periods, into other communities, into other parts of the world. We pray for those people from other parts of the world who have come to make their homes among us, many having had to flee from oppression, violence, poverty, many traumatised or with complex needs, many having left loved ones behind or lost. Help us as sojourners where you have called us to live, to be those who open our lives in hospitality and love towards those who you call to live among us. For Jesus' sake and for your glory. Amen.

SONG

To God Be The Glory

BLESSING

'Hear my prayer, Lord, listen to my cry for help; do not be deaf to my weeping. I dwell with you as a foreigner, a stranger, as all my ancestors were.' [*Psalms 39:12*]

Make me a good neighbour to all people.

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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