

RYDE BAPTIST CHURCH SUNDAY SERVICE

2 May 2021

Dear Friends,

It has frequently been said that everyone has a book in them, but sadly only a small percentage of people ever get to write it. Some people seem to write lots of books though, as if they are making up for everyone else. Having written a book, as a conclusion to years of study, I can confirm that it takes a lot of work. There are of course all sorts of different kinds of books. Some people dream of composing their first novel or book of poetry; others have a work of biography or family history in mind; others have ideas or reflections on certain themes or subjects of interest that they would like to publish. It would seem that the philosopher's words are true that 'of making many books there is no end'! [Ecclesiastes 12:12]

The Bible Course that we have recently started has already given us a good understanding that the Bible isn't just one book but a whole library of books of various sizes and genres. In the Bible we find history and biography, poetry and hymns, teaching and prophecy, letters and philosophy – a whole range of literature. The books were written and compiled over a period of some two thousand years, by different authors in different times and places. Yet the inspiration of the Holy Spirit gives the Bible its strength as it fits together as a single narrative, a single story, a single theme of God's love.

Andrew Ollerton, the author and main presenter of The Bible Course, has recently published *The Bible: A Story That Makes Sense of Life*, which comes highly

recommended, not just for those who have been on the course but for anyone who wants more of an over-view of how the Bible fits together and relates to our lives today. It is well-written and easy to read, and certainly well worth a look.

Surveys and polls consistently discover how few people read the Bible, even though they may own several copies. More worrying is how few Christians read the Bible. Just a few years ago a national newspaper reported that most Church of England worshippers never read the Bible. I wonder what the numbers would be like in Baptist churches, even our own church? It is certainly very difficult to encourage some people to be a member of a home group, attend a Bible study group, take part in a Prayer or Bible course, and so on.

Being part of a supportive small group of other Christian sisters and brothers is actually an essential part of growing into a healthy Christian disciple. Reading the Bible and Praying are not just things we are called to do in private, but are gifts to exercise, habits to develop, in relationship alongside each other. You may remember that not long before the Covid-19 pandemic started we began to look at the Holy Habits of a healthy church. These are things we intend to return to as soon as it is possible to meet together safely in person again. For now we encourage each other online and in other creative ways.

We may not get that book written down, but our lives become living books. On the pages of our days those around us see our true story as it unfolds before them.

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 at the moment - 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 22:25-31](#)

[John 15:1-8](#)

[Romans 8:1-30](#)

CALL TO WORSHIP

All the ends of the earth
will remember and turn to the Lord,
and all the families of the nations
will bow down before him,

for dominion belongs to the Lord
and he rules over the nations.

[Psalm 22:27-17]

SONGS

[Praise To The Lord The Almighty](#)

[Indescribable](#)

FOR REFLECTION

On the front page I made two statements that you may like to reflect upon:

- 1) 'everyone has a book in them';
- 2) 'our lives become living books.'

If you were going to start writing a book, what would it be about? What type of book would it be? Who would you want to read it? What would you want them to know about you, or about the things that are important to you?

What would God want you to write about, to tell others about? It might not be as much as a whole book; it might be as short as a letter or poem? Why put it off until a time that never comes! Have a go at putting some of your thoughts into a letter or poem and then send it to a close friend or family member to read.

Even if we never write anything down, those around us will read us like a book. Nobody can stay unread for long, and those who know us best will easily get to read beneath the cover. We know that a book should not be judged by its cover, but what will others read in our book?

The Bible writer Luke wrote two books in the New Testament. In fact he wrote more Bible verses than any other single author. Look up Luke's Gospel and the Acts of the Apostles and find out why he wrote these, and what he was wanting to achieve through composing these books.

PRAYERS

We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans. And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for God's people in accordance with the will of God. And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.

[Romans 8:26b-28]

O God, early in the morning I cry to you. Help me to pray and to concentrate my thoughts on you; I cannot do this alone. In me there is darkness, but with you there is light; I am lonely, but you do not leave me; I am feeble in heart, but with you there is help; I am restless, but with you there is peace. In me there is bitterness, but with you there is patience; I do not understand your ways, but you know the way for me.

[Dietrich Bonhoeffer]

Loving Father of us all,
transcendent in glory,
may all people honour your holy name
and acknowledge your kingly rule,
that your purposes may be fulfilled on
earth as truly as they are in heaven.
Give us today all things that we need
for our material and bodily wants.
Forgive us the wrong we have done,
and make us ready to forgive others.
Save us from yielding to temptation
and falling into sin;
and rescue us from the forces of evil
at work around us and within us.
For you, O Lord, are sovereign over all
things;
your power is sufficient for all our need;
to you be the glory now and for ever.

[Frank Colquhoun]

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword?...No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

[Romans 8:35-39]

SONGS

Blessed Be Your Name

Never Once

This morning we warmly welcome as our speaker Rev Carl Smith, who has been a friend of mine for around twenty years. Carl is Rector of the United Benefice of St Mary's, Slaugham & St Mary's, Staplefield Common in Sussex, and is married with four children. Carl has just written his first book based on themes from Romans chapter 8, and available from [Amazon](#).

MINI-SERMON OUTLINE

[Extracts from *Saved, Adopted, Free: Living the Romans 8 Life* by Carl Smith printed here by kind permission.]

He works all things together for good for those who love Him

When suffering surrounds us, when grief is raw, when things don't go the way we thought they should, it can often feel as though the opposite is true and that no good could possibly come of 'x'. It is often only as we look back that we see that God has worked things together for our good. But it is in the difficult times that holding on to the truth of a verse such as this one

from Romans becomes so important. This verse is a promise.

It is a promise that has been formed from the experiences of a man who has been through so much suffering and been able to look back and see God's hand on his life. It's a promise that Paul witnesses to being fulfilled time and time again in the lives of others and as he travelled from place to place with the gospel, seeing the churches he loved facing persecution but still thriving and growing. It's a promise that Paul had seen in his own life.

He knows that nothing in his life, even from when he was the 'worst of sinners' (see 1 Timothy 1:15), has been wasted and it has all been used by the God he is in relationship with, for good, so much good. We need to hold on to promises and testimonies like this in our challenging times, to remember these verses, because they testify to what we may not be able to see in the moment.

Nothing Can separate us from the Love of God

An important thing for us to remember when suffering comes is the fact that suffering need not cause separation; in fact, it can't. In Romans 8:36, Paul is making it clear that there is nothing that can separate us from the love of Christ. He lists a lot of realities, things that are very real to us. He is not just listing spiritual things that we face, but he is giving very real-life examples. He speaks of trial, distress, persecution, famine, sword, nakedness, peril. These are things that can affect our entire beings, our entire identities.

We are trinitarian beings, made of body, mind and spirit, created in the image of a trinitarian God. And each part of us is important, each making us who we are, and

this list of the things that we can overcome covers it all – the physical problems, the emotional pain, the mental breakdown, the spiritual opposition. None of these attacks, none of these real-life problems, no matter what their root, can separate us from the love of Christ. Even if we feel separated, it is impossible for us to actually be separated from His love.

SONG

[Be Thou My Vision](#)

PRAYER

Lord Jesus, thank you for all that you have achieved and are wanting to achieve for us throughout our lives - thank you that we no longer live but that you live through us. Thank you for the promise that ultimately your work is for our good, that all our experience, good or bad, is part of the blessing and grace that you lavish upon us. Thank you that absolutely nothing can ever separate us from your love, and that even as we hold on, so we discover that you are holding on to us even tighter still. Help us to reflect your faithfulness through our faithful witness to your love.

BLESSING

All the rich of the earth will feast and worship; all who go down to the dust will kneel before him— those who cannot keep themselves alive. Posterity will serve him; future generations will be told about the Lord. They will proclaim his righteousness, declaring to a people yet unborn: He has done it! [Psalm 22:29-31]

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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