

RYDE BAPTIST CHURCH SUNDAY SERVICE

6 June 2021

Dear Friends,

It was the first day of June and after seventeen months I was finally able to see my Dad for the first time since the beginning of the Covid pandemic. As you can imagine, emotions were running high. He was no longer sitting in his comfortable chair in his new apartment, but having recently had a fall from which he was hospitalised, and more recently being diagnosed with vascular dementia, he was lying and looking very frail and vulnerable in a nursing home bed at the start of a period of assessment. His memory and his ability to process thought is deteriorating, but certain things remain, deep down and hidden, awaiting release. I happened to say to him that it was the first day of June, and then for some reason mentioned the words “June is bustin’ out all over.” ‘That’s from my favourite musical,’ he said, and he burst into song. With a little more prompting the name Carousel came to his mind, and then the conversation moved on along its surreal path.

There are lots of reasons why things get hidden. Ageing, illness, memory loss can make a huge difference. Yet there are many more ordinary reasons too. We can be so wrapped up in busyness or ourselves that we lose sight of the bigger picture. Our projects or our personal goals can obscure the important things of life, and can divert us from our first loves or our most vital commitments. Relationships can suffer as a result, the most important relationship of all being the one we have with our heavenly Father, but human relation-

ships with spouses and children suffer too. Anything that gets in the way of our relationship with God is called ‘sin’. We might think of sin as being big or really bad things, but it isn’t at all. Sin is literally anything great or small that spoils the Father-child bond that we have had with God from the beginning. That’s why what Jesus initiated and what the Holy Spirit continues to do in our lives is so important.

Two verses from today’s Bible readings speak into this. In Genesis 3:9, the man and his wife have hidden from God because they disobeyed him. God calls out, ‘Where are you?’ Is he calling out to you or me in the same way? We must stop hiding. Then in Mark 3:28-29 there is that difficult saying about blaspheming against the Holy Spirit being the unforgivable sin. This has worried people, but needless to say if we are even conscious or concerned then we can be reassured we have not committed it and are already forgiven. One commentary describes this sin as ‘the deliberate closing of the heart and mind to the Spirit of Jesus’, which the teachers who rebuked Jesus are guilty of. That, of course, leaves them cut off from the forgiveness and salvation they need. But it also seems to have to do with causing disunity— these religious leaders were acting in ways contrary to their calling and leadership as expected by God and as demonstrated by Jesus. Their unilateral actions caused disunity and disturbed the peace.

We are called to act and behave as one body, and we have structures to enable that, guided by the Holy Spirit of 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 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 130](#)

[Genesis 3:8-15](#)

[Mark 3:20-35](#)

CALL TO WORSHIP

Out of the depths I cry to you, LORD; Lord, hear my voice. Let your ears be attentive to my cry for mercy. If you, LORD, kept a record of sins, Lord, who could stand? But

with you there is forgiveness, so that we can, with reverence, serve you. I wait for the LORD, my whole being waits, and in his word I put my hope. I wait for the Lord more than watchmen wait for the morning, more than watchmen wait for the morning. [*Psalm 130:1-6*]

Here we are Lord, gathering to meet with you in worship. Come amongst us, by your Spirit, as we pray, sing, listen and share. Open our hearts to fall in love with your creation again, O God. Amen.

SONGS

[Great Is Thy Faithfulness](#)

[Beautiful One](#)

FOR REFLECTION

"Make sure of your commitment to Jesus Christ, and seek to follow Him every day. Don't be swayed by the false values and goals of this world, but put Christ and His will first in everything you do."

Reflect on this quote from the late evangelist Billy Graham. In what ways do our lives reflect worldly goals and values? What things can we change this week to make a lasting difference? Decide to do one thing in a different way, and then watch and wait to see what happens. Praise God that he is in control.

PRAYER

Wonderful God, Today we celebrate you. We celebrate your creation. We thank you that at the beginning of time you breathed life into us.

We thank you that today you live amongst us, walking with your creation day by day.

We come to you in worship today God, Ready to listen to your word and respond in love.

Open our hearts today God, that we might love you and love our neighbour. In Jesus name we pray, Amen.

O Lord, the house of my soul is narrow; enlarge it, that you may enter in. It is ruinous, O repair it! It displeases your sight; I confess it, I know. But who shall cleanse it, to whom shall I cry but to you? Cleanse me from my secret faults, O Lord, and spare your servant from strange sins. [Augustine, 354-430]

Heavenly Father, may your Holy Spirit lead the rich nations to support the poor, and the strong nations to protect the weak; so that every nation may develop in its own way, and work together with other nations in true partnership for the promotion of peace and the good of all mankind; through Jesus Christ our Lord. [Anon]

Lord, we thank you for those agencies and organisations that are working with the poorest and most disadvantaged people in this world. We think of BMS World Mission, Tearfund, All We Can, and many others. We pray for workers and volunteers, for partners, and especially for the people with whom they work. We pray that as a nation we may be generous, for those seeking to restore giving to the international aid budget, for those seeking vaccines for vulnerable people in this world. We pray that your generosity and grace might flow through your people throughout this world. May our giving of money and time give glory to you and bring health and healing to those in need, in Jesus' name. Amen.

SONGS

[Be Still For The Presence Of The Lord](#)

[Graves Into Gardens](#)

We welcome Matt Forsyth to our Service of Worship today. Matt is Churches and Volunteers Officer with *All We Can*, the Methodist relief and development agency. Matt will tell us something about what he does and presents this morning's sermon.

MINI-SERMON OUTLINE

Mark 3:20-35

Protests are not a modern-day phenomena. In fact, protests have been played out across history. How sad it is, though, when we see images of Sarah Everard's vigil, and others like it, turn sour. A switch seems to turn on and what was once a peaceful protest and stand becomes embroiled in war and conflict. The once-humans are now simply treated like unfit animals and its their time to move along.

We see a similar thing occur here in our Mark's Gospel reading today. Word is spreading about this fella Jesus. I mean, if Jesus's own family think he's mad, imagine what others are thinking about him! Earlier in Mark's Gospel we read [the words of John the Baptist] how Jesus will be 'someone stronger than me' (1:7) Although the scribes don't like what Jesus is doing because he isn't matching up to what they believe the messiah is and should be.

Isn't it funny how we can act in the same sort of way to that of the scribes and disparage and even condemn others simply by our pre conceived notions. For example, you can't do this or that task for one reason or another, often employing sexist or racist stereotypes. Labels, created by historic rhetoric and teaching that has been passed down that is simply false.

Jesus, though, beautifully challenges that in a radical way. He makes clear that his

actions of healing and indeed exorcisms are a clear sign of the kingdom arriving and ensuring freedom for all.

Notice something else that Jesus also touches upon in this text. He encourages, despite the name calling and the out casting... Unity. He encourages communities together.

In 2015 there was a dress that went viral online due to the polarising opinions that it earned. Was it purple or was it gold? Its funny how people can look at the same thing but have different opinions? This feels almost like the story of Jesus. Individuals can look at the very same thing but somehow can draw different conclusions.

Jesus, though, urges unity and that was a crucial part of the Apostle Paul's teachings to the early church.

"Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace." [Ephesians 4:2-3]

These words of Paul show us that unity is not uniformity. Oneness is not sameness. You see, Paul encourages the believers to be patient and gentle and even bear with one another in love! If we all agreed then we wouldn't need to exercise these characteristics would we? Paul knew that there were differences but still encouraged unity.

It has been said that the first lockdown brought so many together with one common goal. However, as the lockdowns continue and the separation increases it feels more and more like disunity has begun to creep in. Do we go back to our buildings or do we wait some more? Do we take the vaccine or do we not? Many things in our society seem to encourage a sense of dis-

unity but the clear thing from the gospel is that Christ encourages one body to be united not to be the same but to know that they are loved.

You see, Paul speaks to the church to work out horizontally what has already occurred vertically e.g. reconciliation, one's own ability to have a relationship with Christ due to the cost that Jesus bore on the cross. Life's journey is for us to continue to pursue unity together not so that we can become one alike but so that we can walk life's pilgrim journey together and experience the fullness of the kingdom as one body.

SONG

Cornerstone

BLESSING

Israel, put your hope in the LORD, for with the LORD is unfailing love and with him is full redemption. He himself will redeem Israel from all their sins. [*Psalm 130:7-8*]

Go from this place inspired and encouraged that you can make a difference in unity. Go from this time knowing that this is your moment – this day, this week, this year is the moment to make a change. Go from this act of worship, overflowing with worship and praise for a God who created the whole earth and everything in it. 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.

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