

# The Bigger Picture

## Doing Church Differently

26th April 2020

### Welcome

Welcome to the second issue of The Bigger Picture. We hope you are able to use the reflections, worship songs and prayer pointers, during the week, to draw closer to God.

May you know God's love and presence through this week.

Mike & Sharon

### Word for the week

*Words of wisdom from our Pastor, Mike...*

We are living in strange days with lots of rules we're supposed to keep. I broke a rule recently that I was completely unaware of. I was locked out of my email account for 24 hours for using up all the permitted data!

What about all the social distancing rules? They can seem quite cruel, can't they? I asked somebody how they were feeling about not seeing loved ones and they said, 'What I miss most is the hugs and the closeness.' That made me think about my relationship with God. I wonder whether he longs for 'hugs and closeness' with me and what that looks like.

Did you try out the meditation in the first issue of The Bigger Picture? In an earlier version of the meditation, we are encouraged to give Jesus a hug. I said, 'I don't know how to do that' and that bit was edited out! Do you know how to hug Jesus? Mary probably did as she tried to hold onto Jesus after the resurrection.

In the letter of James we read, 'Come close to God and he will come close to you.' Ah, so maybe the Lord does enjoy 'the hugs and the closeness' and what's more, he sometimes likes us to make the first move and then he instantly responds.

So, my suggestion right now is that you break off from reading The Bigger Picture and you go into a quiet place where you can be alone with God and give him what he most wants from you, a little quality closeness. Speak to him. Thank him. Worship him. Listen to him. Give him a hug!



### Prayer Challenge

*For those who dare to go deeper with God*

#### Shalom prayer

Shalom means peace, wholeness, completeness. Giving ourselves wholly to God, total trust, complete surrender, gives us a peace that doesn't rely on our circumstances.

The prayer challenge for this week is a prayer, from the Maranatha Community, called Shalom. In this prayer you come to God, just as you are,

open yourself to him, fully commit every part of your being to him, and wholly submit to him.

Before you start the prayer, find a comfortable position in a place where you know you won't be disturbed. When you are ready click on the link.

*Make this prayer your own.*

Shalom – Maranatha Community  
<https://youtu.be/n1BUcB7g5ek>

***Spend time with God and allow Him to transform you.***

## Praying as Jesus Prayed

In this series we look at the prayer Jesus taught his disciples. This week we consider what Jesus meant by.....

**thy kingdom come;  
thy will be done;  
on earth as it is in heaven.**

When we pray 'thy Kingdom come', what are we actually praying? For there to be a kingdom there must first be a king, so what we are saying is, 'God I want you to be my king'. We are also praying for the kingdom to grow, wanting other people to accept God as their king.

As Kingdom people we come under God's rule. We must be fully committed to him, living our lives as Jesus did, putting God at the centre, seeking his face in our decisions, spending time with him, repenting from our sins and looking for his forgiveness, and perhaps most importantly obeying his commands.

When we pray, 'may his will be done', we must be prepared to fully submit to God's will for our lives, fully surrender every part of our lives to him, and fully commit to following his lead.

And we are to pray for this to happen 'on earth as in heaven' because in heaven God's will is done, everyone submits to God - there is no lying and cheating, no selfishness and greed, no violence and cruelty, no pain and suffering as there is on earth. Therefore, we ask that the people on earth obey God as they do in heaven.

So far in this series, we have learnt, when we pray we should start by humbling ourselves before God, to honour and praise God's holy name.

And then pray for God's Kingdom on earth to grow, to commit to being a Kingdom person and to submit to God's will on our lives.

The Lord's Prayer by Hillsong

<https://youtu.be/kUjLd6k6uXk>

## Humble Ourselves & Pray

A number of us have felt God putting [2 Chronicles 7:14](#) on our hearts, with a sense of urgency for us to pray for this country and the world, to humble ourselves and pray, to seek God's face, to confess our sins and repent. If the people do this God will forgive us and heal this land.

We have planned a prayer meeting over zoom to confess the sins of the nation, to seek God, to ask forgiveness. If you feel God putting this on your heart join us on zoom at 7.30pm on Tuesday 28th April.

## Prayer Pointers

*This week let us give thanks for*

- Sunday** our church family and the contact we are able to have whether that is by phone, email or technology.
- Monday** your presence, your protection and your promises that help us to persevere through this difficult period
- Tuesday** friends who know all about us but love us just the same.
- Wednesday** the Girls Brigade, those who lead the groups, the girls, and their families. This week please pray for the Juniors, Jeannie, Willow, Ciara, Ava Mai, Amelia, Tyarna, Luna, Sophie Ann, and Macey.
- Thursday** the NHS, for the staff and volunteers who put their own lives at risk to help and care for the sick.
- Friday** the glorious weather which has lifted our spirits during Lockdown.
- Saturday** great Christian resources that give us spiritual food to nourish and sustain us, particularly the material produced for Spring Harvest at home.



## Sing Your Praises to the LORD

A week of worship from our worship leader,  
Linda.

This week, I believe God is calling us to rely on him. Totally, completely, every day, every moment; to acknowledge our dependence upon him.

Now is the time to sort out our devotional lives!

Jesus said to his disciples,  
"Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest." (Mark 6:31)



Let's set aside time to meet with him; to confess, to worship, to drink deep of his life-giving water, to allow him to meet our need for intimacy, to rest in him.

May he bless you as you seek him this week and may you be caught up with joy in his presence (Palm 16:11).

Here are some links to songs you may want to use to help you:

*All who seek the Lord will praise him and rejoice*

Lord I need you

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LuvfMDhTyMA>

Is anyone thirsty?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R-EQ1cRZudg>

The steadfast love of the Lord

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fUIJEcfy4CI>

Lord, you are more precious than silver

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B2hGhWiAMQk>

God, I look to you

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IKsKeFoOUIE>

When I look into your holiness

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FtL2GUE1RS4>

With all I am

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iTkiCBT0yQs>

## Get Involved

### Sunday 26th April

The sermon for today is available on YouTube. Entitled "Why should we give thanks to the Lord?", Pastor Mike looks at Psalm 118. The link for the sermon is <https://youtu.be/ZVTbdRD663U>.

### Tuesday 28th April

**7.30pm - Prayer Meeting** - prayer meeting on zoom, specifically to pray for the nation and the world in line with 2 Chronicles 7:14.

### Thursday 30rd April

**10.30am - Encounter** - Mike will lead a Bible study (on Zoom) looking at Psalm 139, entitled 'Review - let God examine you'. We welcome your comments on what God is saying to you through this Psalm.



### Sunday 3rd May

**10.30am - Worship & Praise** - a church gathering on Zoom, with Bible readings, open prayer, a 10 min talk by Mike, and songs chosen and led by Linda. We will take Communion during our time together so please have bread and juice ready at the start of the meeting.

### Family Worship

On the MRBC website there are resources for families who want to worship together in a creative way.

I have designed it so you can have a service style time with your family. However, if it suits you better, pick out the items which suit you and your family.

This week the theme is *being thankful*.

<http://www.mrb-church.org.uk/children-and-families-on-sunday/>

*"Give thanks to the Lord,  
for he is good!"*

*(Psalm 118:1)*

