

The Bigger Picture

Doing Church Differently

28th June 2020

Welcome

Welcome to the 11th The Bigger Picture, a spiritual package to help you to connect with God this week.

May the Lord bless you.

Mike & Sharon

Word for the week

Words of wisdom from our Pastor, Mike...

My 'local' is not a pub but Costa Coffee Shop up by the Showcase Cinema. I popped in on their first day back after 12 weeks closure. The staff all enthusiastically welcomed me in. I was the 13th customer after they had been open for 5 hours.



It made me think about the need we all have to be able to go to certain places and enjoy a sense of belonging. It made me think about many of you who have not been able to enter the MRBC building for 3 months.

We have tried to do church differently in lockdown via phone calls, emails, garden visits and zoom meetings etc. I hope you have not entirely lost your sense of belonging to this local church even if you have felt a little disconnected at times.

Belonging to a local church involves commitment to God and commitment to your fellow believers. The first part needs not to be affected at all by the current circumstances but the second part undoubtedly will have been.

We need to remember that not every problem can be fixed. Seeing the faces of your friends at MRBC for up to 3 hours a week via zoom is a poor substitute for face to face fellowship. However, can I encourage you to be a 'half glass full' person rather than 'half glass empty'.

As God's people, you should, 'Count your blessings, name them one by one and it will surprise you what the Lord has done'. God has not changed and he promises to be with us and to strengthen us. So, let us make the most of these unusual circumstances and let us look to God to make us more like Jesus.

CONNECT

Sunday 28th June

Sermon - "[Encouragements & Discouragements](#)"

looking at Acts 28

A short message - "[Made in the Image of God](#)"

Thursday 2nd July

10.30am - Encounter - Bible Study on Zoom - the second in the series on the Kingdom of God.

Sunday 5th July

10.30am - Worship & Praise - a church gathering on Zoom, including, Communion



Church at Home

On the MRBC website are resources for families who want to worship together.

This week the worship is on the theme of Creation—Genesis 1-2:3 with prayer activities, songs and an all age talk on YouTube <https://youtu.be/M42r8Byw-tY>

www.mrb-church.org.uk/children-and-families-on-sunday/

"Shout to the Lord, all the earth; break out in praise and sing for joy!"

(Psalm 98:4)

Bible Study

Mike's thoughts on the Sermon on the Mount, this week looking at Matthew 5:4

Jesus Promises Blessings

'Blessed are those who mourn,
for they will be comforted.'

Matthew 5: 4.

The second of the Beatitudes taught by Jesus is used a lot at funerals. I'm not at all convinced that this was what Jesus was primarily intending though we may be uplifted by the gentleness of God when we are mourning the loss of somebody we love.

When Jesus said, 'Blessed are the poor in spirit', he was encouraging his disciples to recognise their spiritual poverty and when Jesus said, 'Blessed are those who mourn', he was encouraging them to lament their spiritual poverty. We are meant to mourn our natural propensity to sin and this healthy, humble attitude can be a gateway to God's blessing.



Do you ever play Monopoly? My son-in-law is very good at this board game. I tend to be too nice when I 'make deals' and end up becoming bankrupt and losing!

In life, the Bible warns us that we start off being 'bankrupt' and we can only come to Christ when we express sorrow about that moral and spiritual bankruptcy.

We never totally lose our inclination to live selfishly after we become a Christian. But Jesus promises that if we lament our sinfulness, God will provide comfort and reassurance that we are loved and cherished by him as adopted members of his family.

What a blessing!

God Speaks

In this series we'll look at the different ways we hear from God

The Bible

"All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right."

(2 Timothy 3:16)

The main way God speaks to us today is through the Bible, the written word of God. God doesn't change, so all that we learn about God in the Bible still holds true today.

Daily Bible reading is essential for our spiritual growth. When we become a Christian we are 'born' into the family of God, but we shouldn't stay as babies, we need to feed on God's word to grow, to develop our relationship with God and to grow more like his son, Jesus Christ.

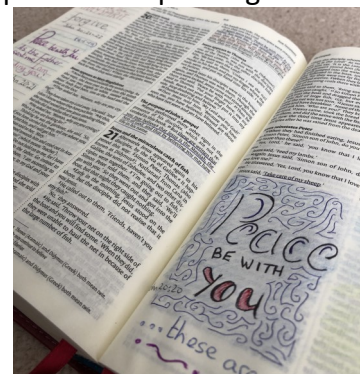
You can use daily devotionals or a reading plan which takes you through the whole Bible in manageable chunks, to feed you and inspire you each day. God also speaks his word directly to you by giving you the words of a Bible passage or verse to look up. This has happened to me when I

have asked for a Bible verse to fit a particular theme.

One of the amazing things about the Bible is how the Holy Spirit can translate the words for you. You can read a verse you think you've never read before (despite perhaps having read the Bible from cover to cover) and you can understand a verse in a particular way on one day and see it totally differently on another day.

The other way God can use his written word to speak to you is by praying with your Bible in hand and asking God to speak to you through his word – then open the Bible and scan the page for words that jump out at you. I

use this method – God doesn't always have a word for me but one notable example of God speaking to me in this way was on the morning of my interview at MRBC. Praying before I left the house, I asked God for a word that would encourage me and was given John 20:21 "Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you."



"I will pour out my Spirit on all people"

Prayer & Praise for the Week

Prayer Pointers

This week please pray for

- Sunday** the completion of the June prayer walking Open Heaven initiative. May people continue to pray for their neighbourhood, may God continue to work in the people of Coventry. May this city be a source of God's Light, Love, and Holy Spirit.
- Monday** Glo who has had fluid removed from her chest and more tests done last week. Results are due early next week. Glo still doesn't have a diagnosis. Please pray for God's hand to be upon this situation, wisdom for the medical team, and for Glo to receive the right medical procedures and treatment.
- Tuesday** The staff, parents and children involved in the Cherubs sessions at church.
- Wednesday** the leadership as they plan and prepare for our return to the church building. Pray they have wisdom and leading from God so we do things in God's time and ensure all risks are minimised.
- Thursday** Mike and Sharon as they continue to lead our church through these unusual times.
- Friday** our national leaders as they gradually ease the restrictions and ask God to protect our country from a second spike of the coronavirus.
- Saturday** for the need to feed hundreds of families in India as, at best, they have only rice and lentils because of Covid19 and typhoon destruction and there is no state aid or social security there.



Sing Your Praises to the LORD 🎵 🎵

A week of worship from worship leader, Linda.

How is your eyesight? As we get older it deteriorates and we often struggle to focus on objects close up. At this point reading glasses can help to correct the problem. But how about our spiritual eyesight?

There are so many things that can impede our view of God; worldly things that fill our vision, distracting us and causing us to lose our focus.

The church in Laodicea had lost their focus (Revelation 3:14-22). They thought they were doing very nicely, thank you. In worldly terms they were rich, but spiritually they were "wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked"!

They had ceased to put Jesus at the centre of their lives and had instead pushed him out to the periphery, depending on their wealth rather than on him. Jesus encouraged them to repent and to turn to him to (amongst other things) restore their spiritual eyesight ("salve to put on their eyes").

I believe Jesus still calls us today to repent and turn to him to restore our vision. He says, "Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me" (v. 20).

Will you invite Jesus in, or leave him outside the door on the periphery of your life? He wants to come in and share our everyday lives (symbolised by eating together), filling our vision, restoring our focus, our passion and our purpose.

Here are some songs to help restore your focus as you worship Jesus: *(click on the song title for the link)*

[Jesus, be the centre](#)

[Keep the banner flying high](#)

[Be thou my vision](#)

[Open the eyes of my heart](#)

[Lost in wonder](#)

[What a beautiful name](#)

[There is a higher throne](#)

