

The Bigger Picture

Doing Church Differently

23rd August 2020

Welcome

Welcome to the 19th
The Bigger Picture.

The fifth of our special
summer editions.

May you know God's love,
Mike & Sharon

Word for the week

Words of wisdom from our Pastor, Mike...

Recently, I strolled over to Caludon Castle, not very far from MRBC. Apparently, the original castle was in an oval shape, surrounded by a defensive wall, including towers, and a moat. The castle is now a ruin, and all that remains is a large fragment of sandstone wall.



Sadly, all that this wall now seems good for is as a 'climbing frame' and as something on which to scrawl graffiti. It made me think of King Nebuchadnezzar who was so proud of his impressive kingdom only to be told by the wise and godly Daniel that it would be crushed.

The corona virus has woken us all up to the fact that few things in the world are impregnable and few things will last forever. In 1 Corinthians 13, we read that, 'Where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away'.

However, Paul also proclaims in the same chapter, 'Love never fails' and in Romans 8 he emphasises, 'Nothing... will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord'.

The greatest demonstration of love in history was by Jesus when he sacrificed his life upon the cross. When we put our trust in the Son of God, we become one of those who cannot be separated from the love of God in this life and the life to come.

Your greatest need is not to survive the global pandemic, but your greatest need is to respond with all your heart to the God-man who loves you and gave himself for you.

Make a Point to Pray

"I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know Him better" (Ephesians 1: 17)

Gracious Lord, we thank you for people who love us, who have cared for us and been there for us (we take a few seconds of silence to picture them.)

Thank you for their advice, their kindness and their prayers. We thank you for your love for us that you have no favourites but you constantly love us fully and unreservedly. Help us to love others in your name. Lord in this time of change and uncertainty, grant us wisdom and revelation that we may make

good decisions for ourselves and for others. Amen.

Please pray for Sarah and her left ear. As you may already know she had an ear infection in her left ear around April time and has been in pain ever since. She has no idea when she will get an appointment with an ENT doctor. She is feeling sad and frustrated. Please pray for her and for an appointment.

Also, keep praying for Glo and Keith and for Martin and Gill. Pray for an old friend of MRBC, Seamus, who would like a driving job. Finally, pray for our beleaguered government that they would make wise decisions in unbelievably difficult circumstances.

The Emotional Jesus

Did Jesus ever become emotional? It has been claimed there isn't much evidence in the Bible of Jesus becoming emotional. Actually, there might be more than you realise.

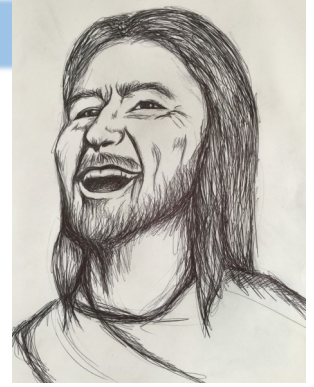
Jesus Laughed

Last time, we thought about whether Jesus ever wept and we looked at John 11: 35 where we read that Jesus cried soon after the death of his friend, Lazarus.

This time, we think about whether Jesus ever laughed. It is a bit harder to find concrete evidence of Jesus laughing but let me say that clearly he must have done as this is an essential part of normal human functioning and Jesus was fully human as well as being fully divine.

We read in Mark 10: 13 that, 'People were bringing little children to Jesus for him to place his hands on them.' I don't imagine for a moment that Jesus would have had a stern face when he was connecting with children but he would have smiled and laughed with them.

When Jesus went to the home of Zacchaeus, I'm sure that both men would have been laughing a lot because Zacchaeus had just been transformed into a new man with a new outlook and others would soon be astonished at Zacchaeus paying back all the people he had defrauded.



When Jesus raised up the daughter of Jairus, I'm sure there would have been joy and laughter all round. After he rose from the dead, Jesus would have surely laughed at the incredulous faces of his disciples. Also, when he cooked breakfast for them on the beach, don't you think it would have been a huge joke that they had enjoyed a massive last minute catch of fish after being frustrated all night?

So, let us all lighten up at least some of the time because it can be such a healthy experience for us to laugh with friends, family and with Jesus too!

Word of Encouragement...

Thoughts from Sue Rattigan.....

CONFRONT THE SPIRIT OF FEAR

When you feel fear you may want to run from it but in God's strength stand firm and declare Jesus is Lord of your life as your saviour...

"The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid, what can man do to me."

(Hebrews 13: 6)

He will always be with you

Then with this knowledge, take a step of faith, put one foot in front of the other and keep going forward.

Remember the 'Footprints in the sand' and feel the Lord's arms around you. He carries you in times of trouble. He is with you today and always.

Remember that there are

365 'Fear nots' in the Bible; one for every day of the year.



We thank God that he made us all different. May we be ready and willing to change. May we rejoice in the different and varied personalities and gifts that God's people have received. May we all grow in unity that we can be centred in Christ and be compliant to God's Holy Spirit promptings.

⁴ There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them. ⁵ There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. ¹³ For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body— whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free— and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.

(1Corinthians 12: 4, 5, 13)

Lord, may we as your children be committed to change and renewal. Help us all to be encouraged so that we can also be an encouragement to everyone we meet. Help us Lord to listen and be obedient to your holy promptings.

Amen