

The Bigger Picture

Doing Church Differently

Week 29

1st November 2020

Word for the week

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

I've discovered more local places of interest in the last seven months than the previous five and a half years put together. The pandemic has made me rethink my habit of gallivanting off to far away places like Wales and I've started to visit some intriguing locations not far from our 'doorsteps'.

Recently, I visited Meriden and happened across an old cross sandstone monument dating back more than 500 years which marks the central point of England. The only problem is that in 2002, Ordnance Survey re-determined the "geographical centre of England" as being 11 miles north of Meriden, at Lindley Hall Farm, Fenny Drayton, close to the Warwickshire border.

We Christians also use the symbol of a cross that, along with the resurrection, marks the central point of Christianity. But, I wonder whether we suspect that somebody will come along sooner or later and disprove the bodily resurrection of Jesus or even the very historicity of a rabbi from Galilee who astonished people with his teaching and miraculous works.

How can we deal with such doubts? The best way is to deepen our personal relationship with Jesus because, when we do that, we will see more and more evidence of his reality as he works in our lives.

The apostle Paul said, 'I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Jesus Christ my Lord.' Paul knew Jesus so well that he went on to say, 'I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death.' So, let us put the cross at the centre of our day to day living and let us do it with great confidence.



What should we pray?

Please pray for....

Sunday - our Sunday service. Pray for Linda as she leads worship and for Mike as he brings teaching from Matthew 25 and for all those who listen in church or via zoom

Monday - everyone involved in the Cherubs Play Group in their first week back after half term. Pray for the staff, the children and the parents

Tuesday - Graham, Pete, Marinella and Mike as they meet together this evening as elders

Wednesday - Frances, Mark and the rest of the family as the funeral of Frances' mum takes place this afternoon

Thursday - Heather Hopkins who has asked for prayer for her sister Maggie who has been diagnosed with bowel cancer. Maggie is awaiting test results as to the possibility of two treatments. The first is to do with her genes and gives her a super immune system to fight off infection. The second is chemotherapy. Maggie is very frightened so please pray for peace as well as healing

Friday - Andrew who has recently been going through a process of various health checks

Saturday - Glo who, despite her illness, continues to raise money for the MRBC Family Fund as she walks round her garden every day



Prayer Day Picture

Mike reports on a picture is a 'picture' revealed to Sue Rattigan at one of our recent prayer days.

The 'vision' was a table full of candles as follows:

Some very small but each alight with a bright warm glow... one red candle that had a wick that was being drowned by its own wax/ some tall candles in glass candlesticks that reflected the light/ one stout candle that was burning bright because the wick had been trimmed and the wax was dripping down the sides making a beautiful texture on the surface of the candle/ some seemed to stutter as if in a draft that could blow them out/ some had a sweet aroma that filled the room/ some struggled to shine and seemed to be sluggish... finally, one gold

candelabra with small stubby candles possibly representing a family 'running out of steam'?

Let us weigh up whether this could be a helpful picture for some of us at MRBC. Then, ask God whether any of these candles represents you at this moment. Is there a message of affirmation or a message challenging you to shine a bit brighter as you live from day to day in a world of considerable darkness?

¹⁴ *Do everything without grumbling or arguing,*
¹⁵ *so that you may become blameless and pure, "children of God without fault in a warped and crooked generation." Then you will shine among them like stars in the sky*¹⁶ *as you hold firmly to the word of life.* Philippians 2: 14-16

SHARON'S SNIPPETS

Where's the emergency?

In one afternoon, during 4 short car journeys in Coventry I saw 8 ambulances. Some had lights flashing, sirens sounding, while others were quietly going about their business, following the flow of the traffic. All were ambulances, all doing the same job, tending to people in medical need, but some stood out while others acted like the rest of the traffic.

This reminded me of the parable of the sheep and goats. In Matthew 25:31-46, we are told, at the end time, Jesus will separate the people as a shepherd separates his sheep and goats. All belong to the shepherd but those on the right are considered righteous and those on the left are unrighteous.

What is the difference? The difference is in our behaviour, our actions, the way we speak, and our treatment of other people.

The difference is a result of having a true relationship with God, not just going to church or calling yourself a Christian. It is a genuine love for Jesus, expressed through our love and care of other people. When we reach out to the needy, feed the hungry, give water to the thirsty, give clothes to the naked, welcome the stranger, and visit the lonely, we do these things for Jesus (Matthew 25:34-39).

Plenty of people do good deeds and show kindness to people who have no way to pay them back so what makes a Christian different? The difference is Jesus. The difference is doing it as an expression of our love for Jesus and a love for all people.

Where's the emergency? We don't know when Jesus will return but when he does, where will you be? Are you a sheep or a goat?

Don't wait to find out - spend time with God now.



Hard Hitting Headlines...

Mike takes us in the book of James (Part 4)

MONEY: HERE TODAY – GONE TOMORROW

For the sun rises with scorching heat and withers the plant; its blossom falls and its beauty is destroyed. In the same way, the rich will fade away even while they go about their business.

James 1: 11

MONEY MAKES YOU MISERABLE

Now listen, you rich people, weep and wail because of the misery that is coming on you.

James 5: 1

GOD DISAPPROVES OF MONEY LOVERS

Look! The wages you failed to pay the workers who mowed your fields are crying out against you. The cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord Almighty.

James 5: 4