

# The Bigger Picture

## Doing Church Differently

Week 31

15th November 2020

### Word for the week

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

Linda smiled when she saw what one of our grandchildren had written in a card; 'happy berfday' was written several times in a lengthy message. I think Linda was glad that the message hadn't been vetted by an adult.

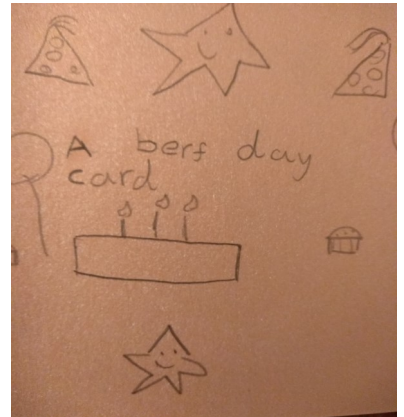
How does God react when, despite our best efforts, we don't get things quite right? I believe he looks at our hearts more than our achievements. I wonder whether he doesn't take us quite as seriously as, perhaps, we sometimes do ourselves.

In the Bible, we read a surprising warning from Jesus, 'Unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven'. Jesus wants his followers to be childlike. Maybe that means keeping things simple. It probably means that we should speak plainly. It definitely means that we should trust God the way a child usually trusts a parent.

Jesus was pointing out the truth that a child is completely dependent on adults for safety, sustenance, and knowledge. The faith God looks for in us is humble, teachable and trusting — like a child. In this way, we are meant to have childlike faith.

The world sometimes misunderstands the idea of childlike faith, thinking that Christians are childlike because they believe in myths and fairytales. But this is not the Bible's meaning when it compares us to children. Instead, childlike faith is a metaphor for trust, dependence and love, and an encouragement to ask for what we need.

So, if you have that annual celebration of your birth coming soon could I just wish you a very 'happy berfday'!



### What should we pray?

*Please give thanks for....*

**Sunday** - the opportunity provided through technology to meet together today to enjoy worship, fellowship, prayer, and Bible teaching.

**Monday** - the Fahy family. Please pray especially for Emma and Joy who have contracted Covid-19.

**Tuesday** - the speedy homecoming of Mary Wade following a short stay in hospital after she suffered a mini stroke. Please also pray for Sue R's mother-in-law, Agnes.

**Wednesday** - answered prayer regarding the Presidency of the United States of America. Pray that the new President would be given wise counsel by his advisers.

**Thursday** - the Regional Ministers and other staff members at HEBA as they continue to provide support for Baptist Churches in the Midlands area including MRBC.

**Friday** - the development of a vaccine to, hopefully, provide protection from the pandemic to billions of people worldwide in the coming months.

**Saturday** - our Prime Minister, Boris Johnson and all his efforts to lead the country well. Pray for all who influence him and help shape decisions that affect us all.



## Feeling Low? Look up!

*Mike looks at what you can do when you lack self-esteem (part 1)*

**Accept** yourself as someone created by God. He made you as you are.

<sup>13</sup>*You made all the delicate, inner parts of my body and knit me together in my mother's womb.*

<sup>14</sup>*Thank you for making me so wonderfully complex! Your workmanship is marvellous—how well I know it.*

<sup>15</sup>*You watched me as I was being formed in utter seclusion, as I was woven together in the dark of the womb. <sup>16</sup>You saw me before I was born. Every day of my life was recorded in your book. Every moment was laid out before a single day had passed.*

*Psalm 139: 13-16*

**Admit** your limitations and failure but remember God's forgiveness is absolute.

<sup>8</sup>*If we claim we have no sin, we are only fooling ourselves and not living in the truth. <sup>9</sup>But if we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all wickedness.*

*1 John 1: 8-9*

**Ask** for God's help to control selfish thoughts.

<sup>5</sup>*Those who are dominated by the sinful nature think about sinful things, but those who are controlled by the Holy Spirit think about things that please the Spirit. <sup>6</sup>So letting your sinful nature control your mind leads to death. But letting the Spirit control your mind leads to life and peace.*

*Romans 8: 5-6*

## SHARON'S SNIPPETS

After nearly 8 months of Covid-19 restrictions we're back in lockdown. Have you had enough of 2020? Plenty of people have. In an effort to cheer themselves up, some have taken to putting up Christmas decorations already.

The tinsel and the lights may bring a smile to your face, and they may evoke emotional memories of family Christmases, but the real help is in the actual reason we have Christmas—God's love in sending his son



The Lord is the everlasting God,  
the Creator of all the earth.  
He never grows weak or weary.  
No one can measure the depths of his  
understanding.  
He gives power to the weak  
and strength to the powerless.

*Isaiah 40:28-29*

Jesus.

When we are at our wits end, when we've had enough, or have grown weary with our circumstances we have God.

Our everlasting God never grows weak or weary. For those who trust in the Lord experience his love and grace. He strengthens us and gives us the power we need to get through any situation.

If you have had enough of the restrictions, if you are suffering from being separated from people and places you love, turn to God and put your trust in him. Trust him for the strength and energy to get through this next stage.

Find new ways to connect with God. We don't put God in the 'Sunday morning' box, we don't pack him away, or get him out, along with the Christmas decorations, so don't put your faith in a box either. Try things you don't normally do. Talk to other Christians about what they do to feel close to God and be open to the possibility of experiencing God in a new way.

Worshipping God *will* lift your spirit, 'for those who trust in the Lord will soar high on wings like eagles'!

Even youths will become weak and tired,  
and young men will fall in exhaustion.  
But those who trust in the Lord will find  
new strength.

They will soar high on wings like eagles.  
They will run and not grow weary.  
They will walk and not faint.

*Isaiah 40:30-31*