

The Bigger Picture

Doing Church Differently

Week 34

6th December 2020

Word for the week

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

Recently, I greatly benefited from an online retreat run by Thrive Ministries. Many of us know that we Christians need to give out to others and we need to take in from God. It is amazing how many of us end up doing not much of either or concentrate on just one of these two areas.

During that 2 hour retreat, I realised that I had been spending too much time giving out to others whilst not making sufficient effort to take in from God. It was great to hear God speak to me through the wise words of Andy Castle. He had taken a sabbatical during the summer and had repeatedly heard from God. As he shared his experiences, I felt God challenge me again and again.



When I thanked Andy for the retreat, he informed me that he would be willing to repeat the session for the benefit of the MRBC community. So, let me know if you want more information. Tell me if you think you might be interested in being part of this.

All the participants will be muted and hidden for the whole of the retreat so nobody will be able to see you or hear you although each person will have some awareness of who the other participants are. The elders will look at an appropriate date, possibly early in 2021, if there is sufficient demand to make the idea viable.

Let me end with an important warning. You will endanger your spiritual health if you don't intentionally give out to others and also take in from God and, sometimes, we need some external stimulation to get the balance right.

Five Facts about JESUS—part 1

Mike brings us some thoughts for Advent...

Often, during Jesus' ministry, he startled people with his claims about himself.

In John 5: 22, we discover his understanding about his personal authority,

'The Father judges no one, but has entrusted all judgment to the Son.'

Jesus was advising his hearers that one day he would come to the earth to represent his Father as the judge of every human being. This was a shocking claim!

As well as being a judge, Jesus was an example to others. In John 13: 15 Jesus declared,

'I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you.'

What had Jesus just done? He had washed the disciples' grubby feet! Jesus was prepared to do what nobody else wanted to do.

So, the first fact about Jesus is that he was and is a **judge**.

The second fact about Jesus is that he was an **example** for us to try to emulate.

More next week...

What should we pray?

We read in *Philippians* that we should 'not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present (y)our requests to God.' So please pray as follows...

Sunday – Pray for our zoom service today. Pray for Linda who will be leading, Mike who will be speaking and all others taking part. Pray that we might all be encouraged during this long hiatus.

Monday – Pray for Cherubs children to feel safe and supported. Pray that the parents will see Cherubs and MRBC as a place of safety and support without judgment.

Tuesday – Pray about the Covid vaccine, for the complicated logistics of the first approved vaccine and for further vaccines to be approved. Pray against any anti-vaccine movement.

Wednesday – Pray for Charlotte G particularly with regards to her business, Jaspers. Pray for others who are now unemployed or furloughed.



Thursday – Pray for all the staff at our local hospital. Pray that they may enjoy good health and give them the energy needed to do their work well. Pray for all the patients that God would protect them and heal their bodies.

Friday – Pray for Marinella's brother, Rob. Pray that he would experience God's peace in the midst of serious illness. Pray for Marinella and the rest of the family. Pray also for Glo and others you know who are ill.

Saturday – Pray for our Girls' Brigade Company which closed a week ago with a drive-in at MRBC where the girls received a parting gift. Pray that we will not lose contact with these families but that they will continue to be involved in MRBC activities.

Lighting the Advent Candles

Week 2 - LOVE

We light the second advent candle to remind us that God loves everyone and will welcome into his house all who believe in Jesus.

¹⁴And as Moses lifted up the bronze snake on a pole in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, ¹⁵so that everyone who believes in him will have eternal life.

¹⁶"For this is how God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life."

(John 3: 14-16)

SHARON'S SNIPPETS

Feeling dry?

When I saw this tree clinging to the last of its autumn leaves it reminded me of Romans 10:2-3,



"I know what enthusiasm they have for God, but it is misdirected zeal. For they don't understand God's way of making people right with himself. Refusing to accept God's way, they cling to their own way of getting right with God by trying to keep the law."

We sometimes don't realise that we're spiritually depleted and need to get right with God. We may have our favourite ways of connecting with God but overtime they can become stale and we become spiritually dry. Sometimes we need a bit more.

On a regular basis, take time to sit with God, allowing him to refill you, refresh you, recharge you, in the way he knows you need, not necessarily the ways you cling to.

Give God that opportunity today.