
SERVICE SCRIPT

DURBANVILLE METHODIST, 25TH OCTOBER 2020, 8:00 & 9:30

CALL TO WORSHIP

SCRIPTURE

- Micah 6:8 (*The Message*)



But He's already made it plain how to live, what to do,
what God is looking for in men and women.
It's quite simple: Do what is fair and just to your neighbor,
be compassionate and loyal in your love,
And don't take yourself too seriously—
take God seriously.

PRAYER

- Let us pray.

It is good to be together, Lord,
with your people,
together listening for your voice,
united by your Spirit.

In this time of worship
Tell us about your kingdom of kindness Lord
so that we can seek it.
Show us your justice Lord
So we can do your work in the world of restoring your wholeness and fairness and
peace

Especially Lord, we want to walk with you,
humbly, closely, daily.
Amen.

SONG

8:00

- *Just as I am* (697)
- Just as I am, though tossed about, with many a conflict, many a doubt, with fears within and foes without, O Lamb of God I come.

9:30

- *The Goodness of God*
- You have led me through the fire. In darkest night you were close like no other. I've known you as a father, I've known you as a friend. I have lived in the goodness of God. All my life you have been faithful, all my life you've been so so good. With every breath that I am able, I will sing of the goodness of God.

PRAYER

PRAYERS OF PRAISE, ADORATION & CONFESSION

- Heavenly Father,
- As we come together in Jesus' name

- Our hearts are filled with adoration
- When we lift our eyes to you.
- For you are Lord of all creation,
- You make all things new.

- Our souls are filled with lasting peace
- When we close our eyes to sleep.
- For you are Lord, you're right beside us
- We're safe within your keep.

- Our minds are filled with inspiration
- When we open our eyes anew.
- For you are hope and love outspoken,
- Your words are full of truth.

- Our lives are full of aspiration
- When we see through eyes that weep.
- For you are Lord of the grand and the broken,
- May we be your hands and feet.

- Lord, be with us now we ask you
- May we worship you in Spirit and in truth
- May we feel your presence around us
- And pour out your Spirit's fruit

- We ask this in the name of Jesus,
- *Amen.*

COMMUNITY

WELCOME, NOTICES & VISITORS

MINISTRY OF THE WORD

PRAYER

- Won't you bow your heads with me?
- Lord,
- Open our hearts and minds
- By the power of your Holy Spirit
- That as the Scriptures are read
- And the Word proclaimed
- We may hear with joy what you say to us today
- *Amen.*

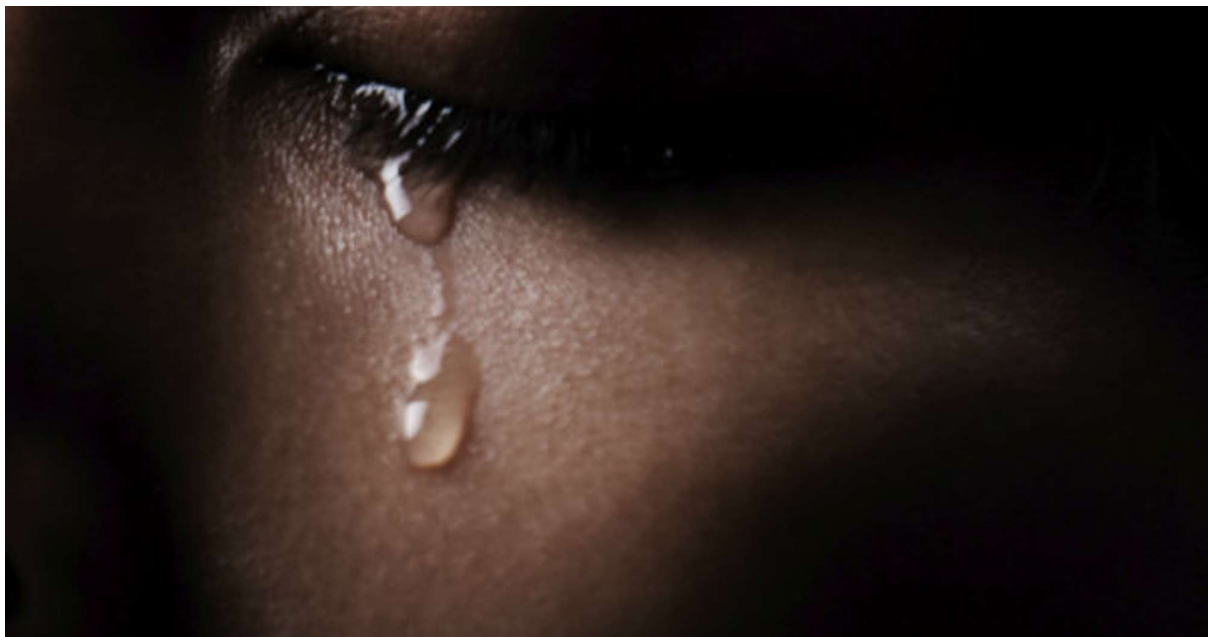
READING

- ***Matthew 22:34–46 (NIV)***
- **THE GREATEST COMMANDMENT**
- ³⁴ Hearing that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, the Pharisees got together. ³⁵ One of them, an expert in the law, tested him with this question: ³⁶ “Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?”
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- ³⁷ Jesus replied: “‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ ³⁸ This is the first and greatest commandment. ³⁹ And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ ⁴⁰ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.”
- **WHOSE SON IS THE MESSIAH?**
- ⁴¹ While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, ⁴² “What do you think about the Messiah? Whose son is he?”
- “The son of David,” they replied.
- ⁴³ He said to them, “How is it then that David, speaking by the Spirit, calls him ‘Lord’? For he says,
- ⁴⁴ “‘The Lord said to my Lord:
- “Sit at my right hand

- until I put your enemies
- under your feet.”
- ⁴⁵ If then David calls him ‘Lord,’ how can he be his son?” ⁴⁶ No one could say a word in reply, and from that day on no one dared to ask him any more questions.
- *This is the word of the Lord*
- *Thanks be to God*

MESSAGE: BUT, WHO DO YOU SAY I AM?

INTRODUCTION



- I don't need to tell you it's been a tough year.
- COVID has changed the world.
- COVID has touched all of us, if not directly, certainly indirectly, emotionally, economically.
- It has taught us a few things:
- We know how to interpret emotion in peoples' eyes much better than we did.
- I'm now much better at interpreting 'stop putting all those sweets in the shopping trolley' as I see Lyn's glaring eyes above her mask.
- We've learnt to avoid one another, unfortunately.
- All this talk of staying at home and social distancing has made us very wary of one another.
- I'm still working from home, and in fact I'm quite enjoying it – I've become a hermit – those of you who know me will see that I'm in caveman mode.

- I've learnt how to attend online meetings, with the mute button on, and one ear listening for questions that I need to answer.
- But I've also learnt to like 'on demand' online church services, short, to the point, not really demanding any engagement or community. Just listening, drinking coffee, in my slippers, and being like those two old men in the Muppet movies, criticizing from the side.
- Oh, and on the subject of avoiding one another I've also learnt the 2m supermarket dance, which you do when you're trying to pass one another in the aisle.
- Luckily we can laugh, but we've also been through tough stressful times as the virus comes very close.
- That waiting, staring at the ceiling at night, for the test results.
- Learning the ability to remember exactly who we had contact with, and who sat where, at that last get-together.

CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

- From a Christian community point of view, there's been a loneliness, a sadness because we have been unable to do those things that make us who we are as a family: meet for fellowship, hug one another, worship together.
- We tried to encourage one another with cute reminders.
- We sent these little WhatsApp messages, with cute emojis and little videos.
- LOTS of them.
- Don't get me wrong.
- Some were beautiful, meaningful.
- But many somehow felt a bit ... shallow?
- Somehow trying hard to reclaim some of the comfort we've lost in these times?
- But I think it goes deeper than that.
- I believe Christians the world over have had to take stock of their relationship with our Lord.
- I've certainly had to.
- I've had to learn that things we took for granted are not certain.
- Both of my sons lost their jobs in the lockdown, and have had to make very different plans to make ends meet.
- I think we're all having to search for the answers to these questions:
- When what we're familiar with, and comfortable with, is taken away, what is it that remains?

- What is it at the centre of our faith that we need to cling to, be confident of, put our energy into?
- And what are those things that we need to see as unimportant, and leave them behind?
- And I think there's a chance that God is using this time to teach us to take stock, have a Sabbath, and reflect on these things.
- I've been grappling with some difficult things.

INDIVIDUAL FAITH - WHAT'S IN IT FOR ME?

- We love the concept of individual faith, individual benefit.
- You see, I had this deal going with God, as long as I kept close, He would look after me.
- Sort of like this butler in the sky.
- I ring the bell, and as long as I've have kept him happy, He comes running.
- Its all about **me** and what **I** can get out of it.
- In a world-wide epidemic, with its pain and questions and fear, all of a sudden, I'm not so sure anymore.
- Perhaps its not all about **me** and **my** faith and **my** salvation?

A CHANGED WORLD, CRYING OUT

- As the lockdown bit, we were fearful, and we stayed home, we closed our doors and our hearts to the countless people who were so hurt by the economic fallout.
- Now we're coming out of hiding to a world that has changed, and is crying out in pain.
- The homeless, the jobless, wondering where the next meal is going to come from, asking, begging, pleading.
- People we know and love losing their jobs because the companies are having to tighten their belts.
- Increasing violence on the farms, in the townships, even in the small towns.
- The complexity of the problems has multiplied, and the noise around them is deafening.
- And I'm finding myself asking God "Wow, Lord, where are you in this? And what do you want me to do? How on earth do I go forward from here?"

WHAT DOES GOD HAVE TO SAY? (4:12)



STORY

- We come to our reading for today.
- In my experience, when God asks a question, we'd better sit up and take notice.
- When God asks a question, it's not because He doesn't know the answer, it's because He wants to teach us something.
- What can we learn from this interchange with the Pharisees?
- The Pharisees grill Jesus on his knowledge of the Scriptures - a great academic debate, showing off knowledge, testing knowledge, sharing a comfortable understanding that they understand God, and what He does, and why He does it.
- What a beautiful answer Jesus gives, summarising all of the Bible in two commands:
- Love God. Love those around you.
- Not academic.
- Not just involved, but all-in, living in a different way.
- *And as I read this, I asked myself:*
- *Andrew, are you skirting around the issue, having nice academic debates about the Word, and avoiding the painful part of it getting to the heart of you, and changing you?*
- Then Jesus gets to the point.
- He asks them a question.
- He asks the Pharisees: "Who do you say the Messiah is?"

- They say “he will be a man, descended from David”.
 - A man, just like Moses and David.
 - Perhaps a great prophet, but a man.
 - Certainly not the Son of God, whom we need to worship, give our lives to.
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- So Jesus asks them ‘why does David address the Messiah as Lord in the Psalm 110:1?’
 - And they can’t answer.
 - Here, right in front of them is the Messiah as part of the Trinity - Jesus, fully human, descendent of David AND Jesus, as Lord and Saviour to David.
 - Right there in their precious academic scriptures, behind all of the detail that they love to debate, is the glaring fact that David knew who Jesus was, and worshipped Him, even before He was born a human being.
 - No wonder they couldn’t answer!
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- *So I asked myself: Andrew, who is the Messiah to you? Is He a good man who lived long ago, who tells us we need to be nice to people? A compassionate man who sat and talked to everyone, who healed and taught, fixed people’s problems and showed the way to live a moral life? Maybe even a prophet who was closer to God than we can ever be? Or is He your Lord and Saviour?*

SAME QUESTION, ANOTHER ANSWER



- Jesus asked Peter the same question earlier in Matthew’s gospel.
- *Matthew 16:13-16* says this:

13 When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?”

14 “Well,” they replied, “some say John the Baptist, some say Elijah, and others say Jeremiah or one of the other prophets.”

15 Then he asked them, “But who do you say I am?”

16 Simon Peter answered, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.”

- Lots of people saying a whole lot of things, debating a whole lot of theories.
- They lived in a difficult time, just like now.
- They wanted solutions to pain and suffering, just like now.
- Just like now, with the uncertainty, and the noise and the haste that we live in.

- But, what do *you* say, Peter?
- ‘You are the Messiah, the Son of the Living God’.
- And Jesus says this statement will change Peter’s whole life, what he does, the role he will play in the kingdom.

- *Who do **you** say I am, Andrew?*
- *And what does that mean to you?*
- *How are you living your life, right here, right now, in these tough times, with me as your Messiah?*

WHAT DO WE NEED TO DO ABOUT IT? (7:09)



- I went for a walk this past week.
- Past a school where the kids were being dropped off.
- A man was kneeling down next to his car, talking earnestly to a little boy.
- With his too-big school bag on his back.

- As I came closer, I could see the little chap was crying,
 - Quite obviously nervous about going back to school.
 - The Dad was stroking his head.
 - But the little fellow was looking around - I think all the noise, and people with face-masks, and the prospect of leaving his parents and venturing out was just too much for him.
-
- Do you remember your first day at school?
 - Remember that feeling?
 - PLEASE, let me get back to all the home comforts - I don't know about all this!
-
- Aren't we there?
 - I know I am.
 - PLEASE Lord, this is a scary new world, please let me go back to the comfortable place we were before!
-
- I think we are like that little boy, scared at the new world, at what it means, and how it works, and what dangers it holds.
 - And I believe God is like that Dad, saying, "I'm here, I love you, I would never leave you alone in a dangerous place."
 - "There's such a lot of exciting things that will happen today, things that will teach you, and touch your heart, and stimulate your mind."
 - "Be strong and courageous, do not be afraid, do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go." (Joshua 1:9)
-
- I disappeared around the corner, so I didn't see what happened.
 - But I'm hoping the little chap took a deep breath, and walked into the school doors, to start an exciting day in an exciting new world.
 - And the Dad, proud at the courage being shown, got into his car and drove away, smiling in his rear-view mirror.

CONCLUSION (8:20)

- God knows our anxieties, our challenges, our pain.
- Of course there are questions, noise, distractions, fear.
- He knows the world is not as it should be.
- His people are taking their eyes off Him, and it breaks His heart too.

- But, He knows what He's doing, "He's got the whole world in His hands" says Psalm 95:4,5.
- "Take this time, Be still and know that I am God" says Psalm 46:10.
- And He is right here, with us. "For in Him we live and move, and have our being" says Acts 17:28.
- Perhaps most importantly, He says to all of us who are worried and distressed, "I've got this".
- In Isaiah 30:15 says:
- Return to me.
- Rest in me.
- And I will rescue you.
- Still your soul.
- Be confident in me.
- And that will be your strength.
- *Amen. (9:14)*

COMING BEFORE GOD

REFLECTION

- Won't you just spend a time in quiet, stilling your soul, away from the noise and haste of the world?
- And then Charles will lead us in a beautiful new song, called "Is He Worthy?".
- *Song: Is He Worthy?*

PRAYERS OF REFLECTION & INTERCESSION

- I found this most beautiful prayer by John van de Laar this week.
- Let's use it to ask God to help us to be quiet, to keep our eyes on Him, and to live out our faith for all to see a better way.

Quiet Proclamation

John van de Laar

When we are tempted to add our noise
to the shouting of opinions and doctrines
Teach us, O Christ, the art of quiet proclamation.

When we face the crashing of guns and missiles,
And the loud justifications of violence
Teach us, O Christ, the art of quiet proclamation.

When we are overwhelmed by the wails of those who grieve and suffer
And by the muzak of those who deny the world's pain
Teach us, O Christ, the art of quiet proclamation.

When we are lured by the song of materialism
And lulled by the lullaby of the immediate and the expedient
Teach us, O Christ, the art of quiet proclamation.

In all the places where your love and justice are unheard
Where the song of your grace is silenced
And where the noise of sin robs people of life
Teach us to hear the whispers of your reign
And to quietly, persistently
Proclaim your Gospel in word and action.

Amen.

CLOSING

SONG

- 8:00: *Sing we the King* (244)
- Sing we the King who is coming to reign. Glory to Jesus!
- 9:30: *Blessed be your name / Build your Kingdom here*
- Let the darkness fear, show your mighty hand, heal our streets and land, set your church on fire, win this nation back, change this atmosphere, build your kingdom here we pray.

BENEDICTION

- And now, may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all.
- *Amen.*