

The Corona Chronicle

West Worthing Evangelical Church Rugby Road.

Sunday May 31st Whitsunday (Pentecost)

www.westworthingevangelical.co.uk

Being Church while the Corona Virus emergency is on

Reading epitaphs can be a fascinating pastime. Engraved on headstones there are all types of information which catch your attention. There is the sort of epitaph which could double up as an entry in Who's Who, setting out a comprehensive list of the main events in the person's life. Then there is the wording that invites the conclusion that the deceased was a saint with a capital S. And there are others: some ironic, like this one on the gravestone of a dentist, "He is filling his last cavity" or those which seem to indicate the dead person's life style, such as this on a woman's tombstone, "She sleeps alone at last."

By now you may be wondering why my preoccupation with epitaphs. Forgive me when I say that I am deadly serious, for the one thing that they have in common is that they mark the end of their subject's time and impact in this life. And most epitaphs, certainly today, do not hold out anything beyond. Death is the big full stop.

But, in fact, that should make us face the question – after death what then? Anything? After death where then? Anywhere? Or is death the finish, is it eternal oblivion?

The Christian message has often been contemptuously dismissed as "pie in the sky when you die". That is to sell the gospel short for it actually encompasses and affects the whole of life and brings great benefit to a nation's society. But the gospel emphatically does have at its heart the overwhelming need for men and women to be brought into a right relationship with God. This need has been brought about by our rejection of God and his rule, our stubborn insistence that we will do life our way. But this is a God before whom we must all appear and that will not go well.

The good news that is enshrined in the Lord Jesus Christ is that the God who calls us to account is also the God who loves us and that because Jesus took our judgement upon himself we may be forgiven and changed, ready to step into an eternity with God and one day inhabit a renewed universe. Here is real hope, an assured hope and certainty!



Covid-19 has graphically highlighted the fact, the inescapability, the awfulness of death, which we can sometimes insulate ourselves from considering when meeting a single death. But where in the nation's public arena today is the message of hope, the declaration of a loving God's rescue plan that draws the sting of Covid-19 and death?

When I have heard senior clerics in the media they have talked about the need for kindness and helpfulness to be shown, how important worship is to the faithful, the need for the economy to start up again. All well and good. But where was a clear declaration of the hope of the gospel, the opportunity to find God in Jesus? I haven't heard it. Maybe I missed it, maybe I'm wrong - but I fear I'm not.

Which brings me back to epitaphs. In a church graveyard in Bedale, Yorkshire, these words are inscribed on a tombstone:

*Remember, friend, when passing by
As you are now, so once was I.
As I am now, soon you will be,
Prepare for death and follow me.*

Underneath someone had written:

*To follow you I'm not content
Until I know which way you went.*

Now there's someone who's got it right!

Pentecost

When the day
of Pentecost had
come, they were
all together in
one place.

Acts 2:1



Knowing-Jesus.com

When Jesus ascended into heaven He told His disciples not to depart from Jerusalem but to wait for the Father's promise (Acts 1 v4) for the baptism or the receiving of power of the Holy Spirit. (Acts 1v8.)

They were ordered to stay together in Jerusalem but then to scatter because verse 8 Jesus states 'that they will be my witnesses to Me in Jerusalem and in Judah and Samaria and to the ends of the earth.'

As it says in Ecclesiastes 3 v1 there is 'a time and purpose under heaven.' Later in that chapter it says 'A time to cast away stones and a time to gather stones together.'

What might in it's time seem contrary to each other will in it's time happen. As the moon waxes and wanes so in this age there are times to be together and to receive the Lord's word into our hearts, to praise and worship Him and give Him the glory, to fellowship with each other and to receive the encouragement from each other. So too there is a time of scattering to go out with the gospel..

Coming together or togetherness can be either positive or negative based upon the reason for it. A good example of togetherness in a positive context is the togetherness of Adam and Eve. It was not good for the man to be alone (Genesis 2:18), so God created Eve and brought her to the man (verse 22). The principle of a man leaving his parents and cleaving to his wife was thus established, as two become one flesh in marriage (verse 24).

An early example of togetherness in a negative context is the Tower of Babel in Genesis 11. After the flood (Genesis 6-8), people began to repopulate the earth. But rather than spread out and fill the earth as God had instructed (Genesis 9:1), they stayed close together and became a law unto themselves. Genesis 11:4 records the leaders saying, "Come, let us build ourselves a city, with a tower that reaches

to the heavens, so that we may make a name for ourselves; otherwise we will be scattered over the face of the whole earth." The exact reasons for this tower-building and God's subsequent destruction of it have been debated for centuries.

Most likely, the togetherness required to build such a tower was related to some sort of idol worship as the people were actively disobeying God.

Because they were so unified in their rebellion against God, the Lord destroyed their unity by confusing their languages (Genesis 11:7). This resulted in His plan being accomplished, as people finally did spread out across the earth and subdue it.

Through persecution the church was scattered after Pentecost. The Church grew Acts 3v40 states that 3000 were added to their number, they met together for the breaking of bread, for fellowship and for prayers meeting in their houses. But there were times to 'scatter the stones.'

In Acts 8 we read after the death of Stephen the Church, apart from the Apostles, were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria. We read of Philip going to Samaria preaching the Word accompanied with healing and casting out of evil spirits. His message was heeded by the Samaritans and there was great joy in the city.

It is ironic on this Pentecost Sunday (or Whitsunday) that we are NOT together in one place although through modern media some element of that togetherness has been taking place. It is a time of scattering. These things are in the providential hand of God. The devil might seek to rid the Church by persecution. But one of the main instigators Paul was converted and the gospel spread to the four corners of the earth. Believers responded to the scatterings by the preaching of the gospel. We might not be able to be together as with the first Pentecost but we can use this time to spread the gospel. Churches are using Web-cast services to share the gospel. The 'Guardian' estimated that 25% of the population watched at least part of the service one Sunday compared to the 6% who normally go to Church. Some evangelical Churches like All Souls Langham Place have seen enormous numbers in those who are watching the Webcast.

But being scattered means also the love and compassion we can share in the community. Of course we should do it and we have been doing it all the time but at this time in particular there is a keener edge in what we do. During this lockdown we have got to know our neighbours and they are showing acts of kindness to us and we are showing acts of kindness to them.

David Page

Can you work out which animals (sing.) are in the Wordsearch using the bible references?

Judges 14:8; Judges 14:8; Job 40:15a; Job 40:15b; Isaiah 2:20; Isaiah 2:20; Psalm 74:14;
 Joel 1:4; Jeremiah 13:23; Isaiah 11:6a; Isaiah 11:7; Isaiah 11:7; Isaiah 11:8a; Exodus 16:20;
 Psalm 105:40; Proverbs 6:6; Matthew 26:34; Genesis 22:8; Genesis 22:13; 1 Kings 17:4;
 Lamentations 4:3b; Leviticus 11:30a; Deuteronomy 14:5b. Which bird is not found in the Bible?

z	o	l	e	q	u	a	i	l	b	o	b	a	a	t
t	u	o	m	o	l	e	i	j	f	e	q	a	y	a
n	c	c	a	u	b	a	d	x	p	h	e	a	v	p
o	k	u	r	n	y	a	o	w	y	j	e	p	h	e
y	s	s	a	x	t	z	t	o	v	w	o	r	m	a
l	k	t	m	e	d	e	u	k	h	u	a	o	m	c
p	a	a	r	r	w	d	l	t	z	e	l	a	y	o
l	d	m	a	i	r	o	o	o	b	e	e	f	x	c
a	i	z	b	a	c	m	l	i	p	s	v	i	o	k
z	i	o	p	d	e	h	x	f	t	e	i	y	u	w
l	o	o	n	h	e	c	u	l	a	v	a	a	k	d
s	e	l	e	o	p	r	a	v	e	n	t	b	n	p
l	d	b	j	c	o	b	r	a	w	i	h	x	e	t
b	r	o	o	s	t	e	r	o	l	o	a	y	f	j
e	r	e	x	y	c	a	c	r	a	a	n	a	d	m

Hymn, Reading and Prayers for Pentecost.

Bible Reading Acts 2v1-13

Keep us, O Lord,
while we tarry on this earth,
in a serious seeking after you,
and in an affectionate walking with you,
every day of our lives;
That when you come,
we may be found not hiding our talent,
nor serving the flesh,
nor yet asleep with our lamp unfurnished,
but waiting and longing for our Lord,
our glorious God for ever.
Amen.

Richard Baxter 1615 –91

The very God of peace sanctify us wholly, and we pray God our whole spirit, and soul and body, may be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ; for faithful is He that calleth us, who also will do it.

1 Thessalonians 5:23, 24.

Create in us a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within us; Cast us not away from thy presence, and take not thy holy spirit away from us; Restore unto us the joy of thy salvation, and uphold us with thy free spirit.

Psalms 51:10, 11, 12.

Write thy law in our hearts, and put it in our inward part, that we may be the epistles of Christ written by the Spirit of the living God, not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart, that the law of our God being in our heart, none of our steps may slide, and we may delight to do thy will, O God, may delight in the law of God after the inward man.

Hebrews 8:10. 2 Corinthians 3:3. Psalm 37:31.

Psalms 40:8. Romans 7:22.

O that we may obey from the heart that form of doctrine into which we desire to be delivered, as into a mould, that our whole souls may be leavened

by it; and that we may not be conformed to this world, but transformed by the renewing of our mind; may not fashion ourselves after our former lusts in our ignorance, but as obedient children may be holy in all manner of conversation, as He which hath called us is holy.

Romans 6:17. Matthew 13:33. Romans 12:2.

1 Peter 1:14,

Matthew Henry A Method of Prayer

Love divine, all loves excelling,
Joy of heav'n to earth come down:
Fix in us thy humble dwelling,
All Thy faithful mercies crown:
Jesus, Thou art all compassion,
Pure, unbounded love Thou art;
Visit us with Thy salvation,
Enter ev'ry trembling heart.

2 Breathe, O breathe Thy loving Spirit
Into ev'ry troubled breast;
Let us all in Thee inherit,
Let us find the promised rest:
Take away the love of sinning;
Alpha and Omega be;
End of faith, as its Beginning,
Set our hearts at liberty.

3 Come, Almighty to deliver,
Let us all Thy life receive;
Suddenly return, and never,
Nevermore Thy temples leave.
Thee we would be always blessing,
Serve Thee as Thy hosts above,
Pray and praise Thee without ceasing,
Glory in Thy perfect love.

4 Finish, then, Thy new creation;
Pure and spotless let us be:
Let us see Thy great salvation
Perfectly restored in Thee;
Changed from glory into glory,
'til in heav'n we take our place,
'til we cast our crowns before Thee,
Lost in wonder, love, and praise.

Charles Wesley