

Hasland Baptist Church

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EASTER NEWSLETTER

A FRESH START OR a new beginning - it's something we all need from time to time. So this Easter, as we revisit the greatest turnaround ever (Jesus' victory over death), let's do so not only looking at what happened that day, but also at what Jesus offers us when we desperately need our own fresh start or new beginning. This is especially true in these difficult times, we are all living under necessary restrictions, some up suffering from existing illness and others with the CoVid-19 virus.

We all have so many urgent thoughts on our minds this Easter, we have already been in lock-down for three weeks, some for longer. We are trying to cope with the mess that the world is in and maybe some of our lives; it's easy to put God to the back of our minds. But that's ok, because God still wants you! He's there all the time, waiting patiently in line! He's sovereign and can make lemonade out of lemons like us!

But if you want to talk about an ultimate mess, and an incredible turnaround, just look at Jesus' time on earth. Talk about

turnarounds. Jesus came to earth to personally solve our sin problem. Yet he was rejected by the masses, betrayed by a friend, deserted by his followers - then tortured and killed. At that point, humanity's destruction was not only justified, it was sealed. That was a Friday to forget.

Perhaps the writer of Proverbs 3:1-2 sums up our hope for an end to our present mess.

**"My son, do not forget my teaching,
but keep my commands in your
heart, for they will prolong your life
many years and bring you peace
and prosperity".**

As I said in my message a couple of weeks ago, we may not have a Church that's open, but we do still have a Church, it's just redistributed. A Church is what is left when the building is burnt down, well our Church is what's left when our building is temporarily closed down.

God's blessings to you all.

John

Church Prayer Line & Virtual Services

"where two or three are gathered together in my name"

Many of you are already part of our prayer line, sadly not everyone is able to join. This because it is run using a social media platform called WhatsApp and requires a smart phone or tablet usually. If you are not currently part of the group and wish to join please email us at haslandbaptist@gmail.com. to join just send us your mobile phone number.

One vital way we are using Prayer-Line is to hold meetings, usually each Thursday from 7pm onwards and on Sunday morning from 10.30am. There's no fixed structure but at present Roy starts the meetings with some video and audio links and then those wish to contribute do so as the Lord directs. The main parts of the meeting; audio and video recordings, prayers, scripture and message are then added to the church website www.haslandbaptist.co.uk



Closed Doors - Open Hearts

So, for a short time the doors of our Church are closed. A microscopic virus has achieved what nothing has managed in almost 100 years.

Our Church can trace its roots back to around 1923 when the Pastor, Sister Nellie Allen ministered her flock from what was then known as 'the tin Tabernacle', a small borrowed tin building on Eyre Street in Hasland, a suburb of the market town of Chesterfield, Derbyshire.

By 1937 the church had moved into its own premises a short way along Eyre Street, where it remains today.

By 2015 the Church members took the difficult decision to close. However, on hearing this news local evangelist John Pickering knew that God had brought him into the position in his life, after retirement from work as a school teacher and from ministering God's word in many ways, where he should take on the pastoral role and guide the Church and local community in the future.

The Coronavirus may have forced us to close for a while, but our future is bright - why?

Because God is with us in our hearts.



Triumphal Entry to Jerusalem?

By riding into Jerusalem on the colt of a donkey, Jesus fulfilled an ancient prophecy in Zechariah 9:9

“Rejoice greatly, Daughter Zion! Shout, Daughter Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and victorious, lowly and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.” (NIV)

This was the only instance in the four Gospel books in which Jesus rode an animal. By riding a donkey, Jesus illustrated the kind of Messiah he was - not a political hero but a gentle, humble servant.

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Throwing cloaks in the path of someone was an act of homage and submission and, along with the throwing of palm branches, served as a recognition of royalty. The people recognized Jesus as the promised Messiah. The people of Jerusalem saw Jesus as an earthly king who would defeat the oppressive Roman Empire.

Their vision of him was limited by their own finite and worldly needs. They failed to understand that Jesus had come to triumph over a much greater enemy than Rome - an enemy whose defeat would have an impact far beyond the boundaries of this life.

When Jesus rode into Jerusalem, the crowds refused to see him as he truly was but instead placed their personal desires on him.



Geoff Bell - The Way of the Cross - Isaiah 53: 4-9

*“Greater love has no-one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends”
(John 15:13).*

Jesus said: “I am the good Shepherd: the good shepherd gives his life for the sheep” John 10:11)

CRUCIFIXION WAS INVENTED by the Persians in around 400BC as a method of capital punishment in which the victim was tied or nailed to a large wooden beam, raised up high and left to hang, perhaps for several days, until eventual death from exhaustion and suffocation. It was developed, during Roman times, into a punishment for the most serious of criminals. It was a very cruel way to die - one of the worst!

John the Baptist, when he first saw Jesus, said, “Look, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world” (John 1:29).

Lambs were constantly being sacrificed daily in the Temple at Jerusalem, as an offering for sin.

The Jewish leaders contrived to have Jesus put to death by the Romans, as they were not allowed to carry out a death penalty, and anyway, it would have been by stoning, which is not what had been prophesied by Isaiah in our main reading Jesus was put to death at the Feast of Passover, which celebrates the freeing of the Hebrew slaves from Egypt long ago. They had sacrificed a lamb and put the blood on the door posts of their houses so that the angel of death would not harm them, for God had said, “When I see the blood I will pass over you” (Exodus 12:33)

Jesus had done nothing wrong and was being sacrificed to pay the penalty for our sins, it was for us he died. “He himself bore our sins” in his body on the cross, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; “by his

wounds you have been healed.” (1 Peter 2:24). There was no other way.

For he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors (*Isaiah 53:12*)

Some of Jesus' last words spoken from the cross were, **‘It is finished’**

(John 19:28)

**Near the cross! O Lamb of God,
Bring its scenes before me;
Help me walk from day to day,
With its shadows o’er me.**

(Frances J. Crosby)

For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved

it is the power of God.

(1 Corinthians 1:18)

God bless you all. Geoff

Lord, I thank you that you died in my place at Calvary. Help me to know the joy of my sins being fully forgiven and enable me to take up my cross daily and follow you.



Roy Smith - Jesus Lives

*Yet like a stone tossed into the waters,
the ripples continue outwards.*

WE ARE CELEBRATING an event that in normal circumstances over a billion people around the world would be gathering together to celebrate.

Even though we are all restricted by a terrible microscopic virus, we all remain steadfast in our belief of the Lord's resurrection on the third day.

For years prophecies were revealing that God had higher plans for humanity. At one definitive point in time one entered into the fulfilment of those, one whose authority bowed to no one, but to the Creator and Father of all who he came to make known, one whose power defied that of both political and religious leaders and instead showed his power in touching and transforming the most simple and sinful of all, and any who in humility and hunger had ears to hear.

Lives around him were being filled with hope. But the climax of this great invasion surprised them all. Suddenly a triumphant entry into Jerusalem was preceding tragedy, talk of suffering and betrayal, an arrest, a trial that was filled with mockery and finally an terrible crucifixion.

**There in the grave their hopes
were sealed by a stone.**

But then, early that third day, the dawn revealed the power of God beyond anything they had known.

In celebrating the resurrection of Christ, we are reminded in Scripture that this event was never merely an impersonal concept of power, but a personal encounter.

The apostle Paul, once a religious leader known as Saul, was compelled to silence the testimony concerning Christ, himself was encountered and changed.

1 Corinthians 15:3-8 (NIV)

“For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, and then to the Twelve. After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers and sisters at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born.”

Paul prays for us all:

Ephesians 1:18-20 (NIV)

“I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people, 19 and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is the same as the mighty strength 20 he exerted when he raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms”

The Soldier at the Tomb

I don't know why were here, I said, it's cold and dark and I'm fed up guarding this place. He's dead, we all die, some just die in different ways; who was he anyway. Yeah, but he didn't die like most, came a mutter from the other side of the huge stone covering the door.

We nailed him to the cross and hoisted it upright and I'll never forget the words that he said at the end. I was responsible for killing him - and he forgave me!

Didn't you hear what the thief next to him said - he asked this Jesus from Nazareth to remember him. I can't stand these thoughts - hanging there close to death and he told the other guy "today you will be with me in paradise".

I was scared when it suddenly went dark and I felt very cold. This Jesus sounded like he was the loneliest man in the world hanging there. I fell over as the the earth shook. When the darkness lifted I felt better, but I tell you, that was no mere man we crucified.

Since when were we ever asked to guard a tomb let alone one sealed like this, something isn't right.

What's that! a sudden burning light flashed over me, like I'd looked into the midday sun. My eyes hurt and my head aches and a huge vibration like thunder is rattling around us, I can't move or speak and I feel numb.

I can feel my senses coming back now, where are my mates? There they are, looking towards the entrance to the tomb - they look terrified; the stone has been rolled away from the entrance!

Slowly I step towards the entrance myself and look inside - the hair on the back of my neck is tingling, the body has gone; this Jesus from Nazareth has gone.

He's gone, he's alive I said. "Shut your mouth" came a reply. I tell you, he's alive. How are we going to explain this? what are we going to tell the Centurion?, we can't tell him we didn't see anything or know anything. "You've got to think of something" came the response, "or forget this ever happened" said another.

No I thought, shaking and with tears in my eyes, forget it if you can, but whether you like it or not:

**Jesus is alive,
and that changes everything.**

Mike Glover - The Road To Emmaus - Luke 24: 13-35

Lord, may we feel the warmth of your presence, set our hearts on fire with your resurrection power.

The two believers, one named Cleopas, had a stranger joining them on their walk to Emmaus, they didn't recognise it was Jesus. The stranger wanted to know why they looked so miserable. They shared how they felt let down by what happened to Jesus, and though some said they had seen Jesus, they were doubtful.

The road we are on at the moment as a nation, with so much uncertainty, may make us feel "downcast" and unable to connect with Jesus. How can we have a fresh vision of our Resurrected and Exalted Jesus, our hope and security?

The travellers arrived at their destination just as the main part of the day was over, they invited him to stay with them.

"When he was at the table with them, he took bread, gave thanks, broke it and began to give it to them. Then their eyes were opened and they recognized him, and he disappeared from their sight. 32 They asked each other, 'Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?' (30-32)

They were blind to Jesus who had been there all the time. Then as soon He broke bread and gave it them, their eyes were opened and they could see it was Jesus. They shared how their hearts had been burning as He opened the Scripture to them. They returned to Jerusalem at once to tell the other disciples.

John Wesley was heavy-hearted, and reluctantly attended a group meeting that evening in a Moravian chapel on Aldersgate Street in London. It was there, while someone was reading from Martin Luther's Preface to the Epistle to



the Romans, that he felt that his heart was "strangely warmed". He met the risen Saviour and Lord. A changed man, whom God used to help many, many others to meet the risen Saviour.

Circumstance could cause us to be spiritually blind but we can be assured that Jesus wants to give us a fresh revelation of Himself as the Risen and Exalted Lord who has paid the price for our sin, defeated Satan and made us more than conquerors.

Amen.

Mike



Open the eyes of my heart, Lord.

Open the eyes of my heart

I want to see You

I want to see You

To see You high and lifted up

Shining in the light of Your glory

Pour out Your power and love

As we sing holy, holy, holy



**May you know the presence and power
of Jesus with you this Easter and
beyond.**

*I would like to introduce you to a
contemplative way of reading.
Here is how you do it:*

SLOWLY - the Bible is wide and deep with God's love, mercy and mystery. Let it speak to you and stop when it does and reflect on what has been revealed.

IMAGINATIVELY - enter into the story and imagine being there. It is true to say as we read the Scriptures we become very much part of it, because it speaks to us in our situation. You can read the passage slowly and imaginatively several times.

PRAYERFULLY - what the passage reveals to you then turn it into prayer or praise.

OBEDIENTLY - if God is speaking to you about something or someone respond as He is showing you.

Why not try this contemplative way of reading Scripture with the following passages: Psalm 23, Psalm 46, Mark. 4:35-41. There is nothing like hearing God speak to us through our Scripture reading.

*May you and all of your family and
friends be blessed this Easter
AMEN*