

WELCOME and PRAYER

Hi again its nice to be sharing with you all again. Let us begin with prayer.

Father, again we seek you. Join with us by your Spirit, help us to worship in a quiet, respectful manner. We turn to your word as it speaks to us.

May our worship, openness, and our seeking to connect with you, Jesus and the Holy Spirit, be worthy of that connection. Forgive us Lord, the dark times when darkness prevails, and we struggle to find you. Thank you Father that your risen Son finds us whenever we ask to walk alongside, to comfort, listen, and forgive. We again turn to the cross worn by Jesus for us.

Bless us Lord as we worship and again seek your presence in our lives.

Amen.

HYMN 265 AHB J Bowring 1792—1872

1. In the cross of Christ I glory, towering o'er the wrecks of time
All the light of sacred story gathers round his head sublime.
2. Through the cross, Christ's love empowers us, worldliness and self deny
By his Spirit it inspires us, Him, through love, to glorify.
3. When the woes of life o'ertake us, hopes deceive and fears annoy
never shall the cross forsake us, from it shines our peace and joy.
4. Bane blessing, pain and pleasure, by the cross are sanctified;
Peace is there that knows no measure, joys that through all time abide.
5. In the cross of Christ I glory, towering o'er the wrecks of time,
All the light of sacred story, gathers round his head sublime.

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Scripture

- ISAIAH 40

“Comfort, comfort, my people” says your God.

“Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and proclaim to her
That her hard service has been completed,
That her sin has been paid for,
That she has received from the Lords hand
Double for all her sins

Message:

Increasingly, you can hear in everyday conversation, the word Karma, or the phrase, “ what goes around comes around”. I’ve heard it in a revenge context, but also just as a “life-fact”. Further erosion of our Christian roots as a country? There is no place for that concept in Christian understanding

Scripture 2

- JOHN 9 vs 1-3

As he went along, he saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked him, “Rabbi” who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” “Neither this man nor his parents sinned” said Jesus.

Message 2

The dictionary gives Karma as: “The Hindu/Buddhist belief that the sum of a person’s actions in this AND previous states of existence, being viewed as deciding their fate in future existences.” Both faiths hold with karma (payback) and Sansara (reincarnation)

In Jewish tradition, it was often thought that misfortune, or illness could be a sign of inherited punishment for past or present sin. I want to share with you an amazing story which speaks into this in a very powerful way:

An Australian Christian family had 2 sons and they were very keen to add a daughter to their family. Having some previous contact with Thailand, their thoughts turned to the prospect of adopting a young girl from one of the many Thai orphanages. They went to Northern Thailand in their search. They asked the director of the orphanage if they could see the most rejected girl child? A young girl came into the room, hiding her face with her hands. In time she showed her face and they were shocked to see a hare lip and large cleft palate. The girl quickly covered her face again. The couple took her with them and raised her as their daughter. In Australia, after much surgery, and reconstruction her quality of life improved. Now in her 40s she lives interstate with her husband and children. She had been rejected many times in the mistaken belief that she could be the bearer of bad tidings.

Jesus went on to say that darkness would be known in the world, but that he would bring light, just he had brought “light” to the blind man. “While I am in the world, I am the light of the world.” Because of the cross and the empty tomb we now know that the Risen Christ (Holy Spirit) still brings light into our lives now. The reading goes on to show that the world tries to find an excuse for this miracle — what’s new!? Recently during easter worship I had to “prove” the Easter Jesus. Historians (not Christian) Josephus, and Tacitus both record Jesus’ life and Josephus his resurrection.

The increasing community interest in (Asian) “exotic” faiths is a concern. It’s just so hard to figure why ANY PERSON COULD BE THOUGHT TO SURPASS CHRIST AS SAVIOUR AND LORD!!!

May God bless you all.

Postscript

This little girl had been rejected many times in Thailand being seen as the bearer of bad fortune, carrying the punishment of past evil deeds by an ancestor.

This story really spoke to me about freedom and forgiveness in Christ and prevenient grace on the part of the parents.

Jesus paid for our sin UNCONDITIONALLY at Calvary. Mark 3:28 “Truly I tell you, people can be forgiven all their sins and every slander they utter.” And Matt 9:6 “But I want you to know that the son of man has authority on earth to forgive sins.”

HYMN 190 (AHB) "Christ our King" Ivor Harold Jones - 1934

1. Christ, our King before creation,
Son shared the Father's plan,
Crowned in deep humiliation,
By your friend and partner man;
Make us humble in believing
And, believing bold to pray
Lord forgive our self deceiving,
Come and reign in us today.
2. Lord of life and Lord of History,
Giving us, when man despairs,
Faith to wrestle with the mystery,
Of a God who loves and cares
Make us humble in believing
And believing bold to pray
"Lord, by grace beyond conceiving
Come and reign in us today.
3. Word that ends our long debating,
word of God that sets us free
through your body re-creating
man as he is meant to be:
make us humble in believing
and, believing, bold to pray,
"Lord, in us your aim achieving,
Come and reign in us today".

Final Word

The disciples, being synagogue educated, held to the belief that the blind man was being punished for current or past sin. Jesus simply told them his blindness was present in order that God's glory could be shown

Revelation 3:21—"To the one who is victorious I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I was victorious and sat with my Father on his throne. Whoever has ears let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches."

Benediction

May the peace, grace and love of God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit remain with you all.

Amen.

This service was prepared for HopeNet SA by Grant Jewell (0403 412 480)

