

**Sunday August 9, 2020**

## **Service for Swansea & Charlestown Presbyterian Church**

### **Welcome & Prayer (Ross Logan)**

Welcome, whether you're at home, or in church physically it's good to be worshipping together. Karma, you know, the idea that "what goes around, comes around," that we get what we deserve, that what we put into things we get back sometime later. We all like the idea that by doing good and being kind we'll receive the same in return, and there are times when we hope that those who have wronged us will get their just deserts. We're usually not so keen though, on being on the receiving end of suffering, even when we've hurt others.

Job, remember, was blameless and upright; he feared God and shunned evil. If there was anyone who deserved good karma, it was Job. And yet, we find that Job's life has been turned upside down, he's lost everything and is suffering terribly. Where has all this come from?

Just like us, Job has some friends who are more than happy to offer him some advice. They tell him that he is reaping what he sowed and so Job needs to repent to regain his previous blessing. Job's head tells him that this seems reasonable, but given his character, and looking back on the way he's lived his life, he is not so sure. Has he really done that much wrong? And so Job and his friends seek to debate the question Why? Why is Job suffering? As we look at Job today we need to question whether we ever get what we really deserve, or whether instead, we get God's grace.

**Prayer.** *Father, we want to come today to offer our praise to you. We need you to quieten our busy minds as we come humbly, struggling to understand the enormity of who you are and your love for us. We know Lord that you have always been here, the beginning and the end. Your creation reminds us that you are all powerful, that you hold the stars in your hands. You give us life and breath; you sustain us, pursue us and redeem us. You are the truth in a world full of lies, light in darkness, the giver of hope through grace. You offer us wisdom, comfort and healing through your overwhelming love.*

*We come today to claim forgiveness, forgiveness that we don't deserve. We allow ourselves to be pulled away from the truth that you have given us. We stray in so many directions and fail to stop and remember you. We forget that you are eternal, and focus instead on the here and now. We are sorry for not doing what we should do, for allowing our pride, self-centredness and sinful nature to guide the way we live. And yet, in spite of all this, you continue to love us as you always have. Help us to remember that this morning and open our hearts and minds to your leading. Amen*

**Songs – Chorus of the Saved** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ilpVNCSOH8k>  
**God is our strength & refuge** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SW5yAqx810>

### **Bible Reading – Job 4:1-21**

*Then Eliphaz the Temanite replied: <sup>2</sup> "If someone ventures a word with you, will you be impatient? But who can keep from speaking? <sup>3</sup> Think how you have instructed many, how you have strengthened feeble hands. <sup>4</sup> Your words have supported those who stumbled; you have strengthened faltering knees. <sup>5</sup> But now trouble comes to you, and you are discouraged; it strikes you, and you are dismayed. <sup>6</sup> Should not your piety be your confidence and your blameless ways your hope? <sup>7</sup> "Consider now: Who, being innocent, has ever perished? Where were the upright ever destroyed?*

<sup>8</sup> As I have observed, those who plow evil and those who sow trouble reap it. <sup>9</sup> At the breath of God they perish; at the blast of his anger they are no more. <sup>10</sup> The lions may roar and growl, yet the teeth of the great lions are broken. <sup>11</sup> The lion perishes for lack of prey, and the cubs of the lioness are scattered. <sup>12</sup> "A word was secretly brought to me, my ears caught a whisper of it. <sup>13</sup> Amid disquieting dreams in the night, when deep sleep falls on people, <sup>14</sup> fear and trembling seized me and made all my bones shake. <sup>15</sup> A spirit glided past my face, and the hair on my body stood on end. <sup>16</sup> It stopped, but I could not tell what it was. A form stood before my eyes, and I heard a hushed voice: <sup>17</sup> 'Can a mortal be more righteous than God? Can even a strong man be more pure than his Maker? <sup>18</sup> If God places no trust in his servants, if he charges his angels with error, <sup>19</sup> how much more those who live in houses of clay, whose foundations are in the dust, who are crushed more readily than a moth! <sup>20</sup> Between dawn and dusk they are broken to pieces; unnoticed, they perish forever. <sup>21</sup> Are not the cords of their tent pulled up, so that they die without wisdom?'

## Announcements

- **Term 3.** Many thanks for all your help and understanding during this difficult time. The following would make a huge difference if we could
  - Registering your intention to come (or not come) by Thursday each week
  - Leaving the first service within 10 minutes of completion
  - Arriving for the second service within 10 minutes of the start of the service.
  - Helping wherever you can. We especially need help with cleaners after the service
- **Face masks.** During the week the NSW State government strongly recommended that people wear Face masks if they attend places of worship but stopped short from saying you had to wear face masks. We would strongly recommend that you do wear Face masks in church at the current time. There will be some washable facemasks available from the back of the Church if you would like one.
- **Focus for August – Hospitality.** Are there ways you can be hospitable with others. For example this week could you
  - Meet for coffee/milkshake with someone?
  - Have a dinner party by ZOOM
  - Ring up and pray with someone else?
  - Go for a walk with someone

Throughout this pandemic we have been encouraging each other not to isolate but to keep connecting. August would be a great time to step that up another gear

- **Grief Seminar.** We are planning to run a seminar on Grief on Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> August from 2-3:45pm. We will thin about the characteristics of grief, coping with grief, supporting others through grief and we will interview one of our people about what has helped them in their grief. Ruth Myers, Jo Barlow and Stephen Taylor will all contribute. Let Jo know if you would like to come.
- **Days Off.** Please keep in mind that Jon has Thursday off and Stephen has Saturdays.
- **Youth Led Service.** The next youth led service will be next Sunday evening at 6pm.
- **MONDAY Zoom Prayer Meeting @ 8.00pm!** <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89793950885>
- **THURSDAY Zoom Prayer Meeting @ 7.00pm!** <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84690052125>

## Kids Talk – QUIZ WORX

[https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1\\_Hi02j0PHSD\\_xpym-FGVhuNLH0HGgtRV](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1_Hi02j0PHSD_xpym-FGVhuNLH0HGgtRV)

**OR Mission Spot with the Parsons** <https://youtu.be/dTFiZEelOPs>

**Song – His mercy is more**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W5EUvOnQr4Y>

## Pastoral Prayer (Jon Brown)

Heavenly Father we turn to you alone for hope in a world of despair. Thank you for Christ our living hope. He cried to you from depths of despair on the cross and you heard him and raised him from the dead. Now we have eternal life in him and nothing in all creation can separate us from your love for us in Christ. We don't have any strength within but we can do all things through Christ who strengthens us. And even though we might be weighed down with grief, discouragement, and many other trials we come before you believing that nothing is impossible for you.

Our God and King, we bring before you the country of China. We often hear and talk about this country for all the wrong reasons. The mention of this nation can stir up fear. But you are sovereign overall and all the nations are but a drop in the bucket to you. We thank you for building your church in China and pray for the continual growth and protection of your people. Give the leaders of the church great boldness and love in the face of a tyrannical state. Continue to overturn the plans of the Communist Party and instead use it to display your wisdom, power and the glory of the cross.

Father we pray for your world and the spread of COVID-19. We pray for places in the Middle East like Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, and Egypt. We ask that you would have mercy on the poorer countries. We pray your church in these countries would show mercy to all regardless of class, gender or religion. Cause the governments and leaders of these countries to care well for their people and especially the poor during these difficult times.

God of peace we pray for our indigenous brothers and sisters here in Australia. We ask for protection for their communities and their elders during the pandemic. We pray instead for your kingdom to spread among them. We pray for this nation that you would show us what repentance and reconciliation means in this situation. Help your church in Australia to lead the way. Give us the love and courage to do it.

Lord we pray for the Parsons in Japan. We ask you would comfort and strengthen them especially as they desire to support their ageing parents but are unable during the pandemic restriction. We pray you would continue to use them in Japan. Help them to further connect with the Japanese culture and speak the gospel into it with great love and boldness.

Father we thank you for all the youth here at Charlestown. We thank you for Impact and all the leaders. We ask during this difficult time that you would be growing the leaders and the youth. Give Cheryl, Matt, Aimee, Sam, Jemma and Jon a real passion to make disciples of the youth. In these uncertain times fill the youth with faith, hope and love. Great God help us all walk worthy of our calling that the name of Jesus would be glorified in us. In his name we pray. Amen.

## Bible Reading - Job 13:13-27 (NIV)

*"Keep silent and let me speak; then let come to me what may. <sup>14</sup> Why do I put myself in jeopardy and take my life in my hands? <sup>15</sup> Though he slay me, yet will I hope in him; I will surely defend my ways to his face. <sup>16</sup> Indeed, this will turn out for my deliverance, for no godless person would dare come before him! <sup>17</sup> Listen carefully to what I say; let my words ring in your ears. <sup>18</sup> Now that I have prepared my case, I know I will be vindicated. <sup>19</sup> Can anyone bring charges against me? If so, I will be silent and die.*

*<sup>20</sup> "Only grant me these two things, God, and then I will not hide from you: <sup>21</sup> Withdraw your hand far from me, and stop frightening me with your terrors. <sup>22</sup> Then summon me and I will answer, or let me speak, and you reply to me. <sup>23</sup> How many wrongs and sins have I committed? Show me my offense and my sin. <sup>24</sup> Why do you hide your face and consider me your enemy? <sup>25</sup> Will you torment a windblown leaf? Will you chase after dry chaff? <sup>26</sup> For you write down bitter things against me and make me reap the sins of my*

youth. <sup>27</sup> You fasten my feet in shackles; you keep close watch on all my paths by putting marks on the soles of my feet”.

## Sermon – You reap what you sow – <https://youtu.be/qP5leTRedIY>

Most of us have probably watched the movie the Sound of Music at least once in our lives. It is an absolute classic. And it contains a classic song written by Rogers & Hammerstein. Maria the nun has been told by her Mother Superior that she would be happier outside the Abbey & sends her to the villa of retired naval office Captain Georg von Trapp to be the governess to his seven strong willed children. Of course they fall in love and confused by this incredible turn of events, Maria sings these words, *“Nothing comes from nothing, nothing ever could. Somewhere in my youth or childhood I must have done something good.”*

They are words that most of us instinctively believe to be true. For when something good happens to us in life we think we’re somehow being rewarded. And when something wrong happens to us we can find ourselves wondering ‘what have I done to deserve this?’

Slide 3

Isn’t that the way life works? If you work hard enough, study long enough, practice harder than anyone else and discipline yourself then the rewards will come. You can achieve anything if you just believe it. The world is your oyster. But on the other hand if you do the wrong thing you will be punished. The law will catch up with you. If you do the crime you will do the time. If not in this life, certainly God will give you justice in the next life.

Slide 4

And that’s what Job’s three friends believe. Actually as we turn to the next section of the book, chapters 3-27 we find out that is also what Job himself believes. For we saw two weeks ago that Job was a good man, a righteous man in chapter 1 who had more than just a bad day but had everything including the kitchen sink thrown at him in a short space of time when he lost his kids, his servants, his crops, his status and his health as a tsunami of horrible things battered his once idyllic life and left him completely & utterly trashed

And then last week we see that Job’s three friends Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar travel a long distance to be with their mate and they sit in shock with him for a whole week saying nothing. They don’t avoid him, they don’t walk on the other side of the road because they don’t know what to say to him. They join him in his misery. They sit with him on the rubbish tip. They cry out their eyes with him. They share his grief, his pain, his suffering.

Finally the silence is pierced by Job’s cry of pain as he laments the loss of everything that means so much to him. Hearing Job’s raw emotion & listening to Job’s pain is too much for his friends. They now feel compelled to correct Job’s misunderstandings & tell him the truth.

Slide 5

### 1. The Truth of It (chapters 4-5)

And it is Eliphaz who speaks first. And **his approach** is that he speaks kindly to his friend, courteously, sensitively. *“If someone ventures a word with you, will you be impatient? But who can keep from speaking? <sup>3</sup> Think how you have instructed many, how you have strengthened feeble hands. <sup>4</sup> Your words have supported those who stumbled”.*

Don’t get upset Job, he is saying to his friend. You have helped others in the past who have found themselves in a tough spot. And in the same way we want to help you now!

Slide 6

Next Eliphaz brings **his accusation**. *“But now trouble comes to you & you are discouraged; it strikes you, and you are dismayed. <sup>6</sup> Should not your piety be your confidence and your blameless ways your hope?”* Job if you are righteous you should have nothing to fear. Now why is that the case? Because there is a law of

sowing and reaping going on here. *“Consider now: Who, being innocent, has ever perished? Where were the upright ever destroyed?”<sup>8</sup> As I have observed, those who plow evil and those who sow trouble reap it”.*

Job we know that if we do good to others it will come back to us eventually. But if we get drunk and injure ourselves we have no one else to blame but ourselves. Job we know that, we all know that. Remember what happened to Uzzah in 2 Samuel 6 where poor Uzzah is "struck down" (v.6) for reaching out and touching the ark of God. And if Eliphaz was talking to Job after the New Testament was written he would say and what about Acts 5, and the story of Ananias and Sapphira, who both die because they tried to keep some money for themselves while claiming to give it all to God. This is how life works Job.

Slide 7

And if we don't believe this just from the evidence all around us, then Eliphaz gives Job **his argument**, let me tell you about a dream I had last night. God told me this is so. *“A word was secretly brought to me, my ears caught a whisper of it.<sup>13</sup> Amid disquieting dreams in the night, when deep sleep falls on people,<sup>14</sup> fear & trembling seized me and made all my bones shake.<sup>15</sup> A spirit glided past my face & the hair on my body stood on end.<sup>16</sup> It stopped, but I could not tell what it was. A form stood before my eyes, and I heard a hushed voice:<sup>17</sup> ‘Can a mortal be more righteous than God? Can even a strong man be more pure than his Maker?’”*

Slide 8

That is going to trump everything isn't it? If God told me that we can't be more righteous than him. If God's word has spoken to me. That's the end of the story, Job. You must be getting what you deserve. So Eliphaz turns quickly to **his appeal**, chapter 5:8, *“But if I were you, I would appeal to God; I would lay my cause before him”.* Job, God is disciplining you like a true son, so accept his correction. Ask him to heal you and help you.

Slide 9

And that that leads to Eliphaz's **assurance**. For if you do that, *“You will be protected from the lash of the tongue & need not fear when destruction comes.<sup>22</sup> You will laugh at destruction and famine, and need not fear the wild animals...<sup>24</sup> You will know that your tent is secure.”* If you repent & believe in this God, Job your life of blessing will be restored to you.

Isn't that good news for both Job and for us? That if repent from our sins, if we turn again to our creator God, that God will care enough for us that he will eventually take away our suffering. That he will use his discipline to effect a profound change in our lives. God is holy. God is in control and so right now we should turn to him and look for his blessings to come.

Slide 10

A couple of weeks ago I got an email from a friend of mine. It was an excerpt of an interview between Jane Clayson of the US Early Show and Billy Graham's daughter, Anne Graham Lotz after Hurricane Katrina tore through parts of Southern America in 2005. Jane Clayson asks, 'How could God let something like this happen?' Anne Graham Lotz replies: 'I believe God is deeply saddened by this, just as we are, but for years we've been telling God to get out of our schools, to get out of our government and to get out of our lives. And being the gentleman He is, I believe He has calmly backed out. **How can we expect God to give us His blessing and His protection if we demand He leave us alone?**'

And the email went on to conclude, *“We reap what we sow! If we ask God to leave us alone, we can't possibly complain when he does leave us alone and so we are unprotected from the bad stuff that happen as a result of our disobedience to God”.* It ended by challenging me to send the email on to all my friends. And if I didn't I can't complain about what a bad shape the world is in.

Friends that is what Eliphaz is saying to Job. You need to repent. You need to come to God. And you need to tell others to repent and come to God. And suffering is God's wake up call. To get our attention & to help us to reach out to the only one who can help, our great God.

I remember a long time ago being a new Christian and being at a fellowship camp where Presbyterian minister Dave Thurston was asked to do the talks. And he spoke on Guidance. From the book of Judges and about how Gideon found out what God wanted him to do by putting out a fleece. Do you remember the story? An angel of the Lord has told Gideon to raise up an army and fight Israel's oppressors but Gideon wasn't convinced he was the right guy. But God, he prayed, if I put out a fleece and it is wet and the ground is dry then I will know, I will truly know this is what you want me to do.

And that is what happened. And Dave exhorted us that if we want to know what God wants us to do we need to set up a test. Put out our fleece. And if God answers your test you will know, you will know for certain what he wants you to do. And so Dave preached this sermon and a couple of people pushed back on that idea but Dave seemed to answer their objections well. But as he concluded he dropped a bombshell. Everything that I have been saying is wrong. You can't take the Bible out of its context. God had told Gideon what to do through his word. Gideon was actually being unfaithful in putting God the test.

Slide 12

Now can I say I have done a Dave Thurston this morning. I have preached on Job 4 & 5 and outlined its message faithfully except if you turn with me to Job 42:7 *"After the LORD had said these things to Job, he said to Eliphaz the Temanite, 'I am angry with you and your two friends, because you have not spoken the truth about me, as my servant Job has'".* Eliphaz is not speaking the truth. He thought he was. It was based on his knowledge, his experience, his understanding of God but he got it completely wrong. What he was saying was rubbish.

Slide 13

Not a complete load of rubbish I grant you. Like most false teaching it was close to the truth. Yes at times you do reap what you sow but that doesn't mean that we always reap what we sow. There is a thing called unjust suffering. There is forgiveness available. We do need to factor in grace. God's amazing grace. That's what Eliphaz completely missed.

Slide 14

## **2. The Truth of It, now secondly the Response to it (chapters 6-27)**

And because he missed the mark, his words hurt Job greatly. So Job responds to Eliphaz in anger. *"If only my anguish could be weighed & all my misery be placed on the scales! <sup>3</sup>It would surely outweigh the sand of the seas— no wonder my words have been impetuous. <sup>4</sup>The arrows of the Almighty are in me, my spirit drinks in their poison; God's terrors are marshalled against me."* Friends, he says, your words have only made things worse!

Job is angry. Eliphaz, he says is nothing but a bag of wind! (6:26). His words are of "no help" (6:20). And friends that is a challenge to us, a real challenge. For when our friends are in a difficult spot, when we go to those who are depressed or anxious or worried and we tell them, buck up. Pull up your socks. Get your act together. Or when we say you have to repent from your past actions that got you here or you need to be more careful with how you are speaking about God and his world, our words may not be very helpful either.

Slide 15

The book of James in the NT warns us about our use of words. James 3:5 reminds us that the tongue, is a small object, yet it can do great harm. James reminds us *"How great a forest is set ablaze by such a small fire. And the tongue is a fire; a world of unrighteousness. The tongue is set among our members staining the whole body, setting on fire the entire course of life and set on fire by hell."*

True Christians should use words differently. Christians should have their tongue sanctified by the Spirit of God. So no unwholesome speech should come out of our lips but only the kind that will build others up. The tongue is there not to wound, but to heal; not to curse, but to bless. It's an evidence of knowing Christ that we are made increasingly like Him in our speech as well as in our actions.

And Job is angry with his friends, yes but he is also angry with God. God is like a monster to him. God is using him as target practise. God is now appearing before him in court and blowing away all his defences away. After all the pain experienced by all his loss, now he seems to be condemned by both his friends and his God. So he cries out "I despise my life, I would not live forever. Leave me alone; my days have no meaning" (Job 7:16)

And you would think that would make Job's two other friends more cautious. But no they seem to go for the jugular. They sing from the same song sheet as Eliphaz and in the words of Calvin "They only have one song and they sing it to death". They are like a broken record stuck in a groove that endlessly repeats itself.

Slide 16

So in chapter 6 Bildad wants to defend God and especially his JUSTICE and POWER. How dare Job insinuate that God isn't just? You reap what you sow. And so if what Job has reaped is suffering then he must have sowed sin. And his kids must have been big, big sinners as well for them to all lose their lives. Listen to how Bildad starts his speech.

*"How long will you say such things? Your words are a blustering wind. <sup>3</sup> Does God pervert justice? Does the Almighty pervert what is right? <sup>4</sup> When your children sinned against him, he gave them over to the penalty of their sin."* How insensitive is that? But Bildad says to himself, if it is true, it is true and Job must hear the truth no matter how painful it is.

Slide 17

God is just. God would never, ever do anything wrong. And then a couple of chapters later the last friend Zophar opens up his mouth. Yes Eliphaz is right God is holy. Bildad is also right God is just but Job you also need to remember that God is wise. So he says in Job 11:7, *"Can you fathom the mysteries of God? Can you probe the limits of the Almighty? <sup>8</sup> They are higher than the heavens above—what can you do? They are deeper than the depths below—what can you know? <sup>9</sup> Their measure is longer than the earth and wider than the sea"*.

Slide 18

Actually Job you should be thankful, very thankful. Job 11:5 *"Oh, how I wish that God would speak, that he would open his lips against you <sup>6</sup> & disclose to you the secrets of wisdom, for true wisdom has two sides. Know this: God has even forgotten some of your sin"*. It could be worse! There is even more to lose! Wow how comforting would that be. Job you were lucky!

Slide 19

It was said of the literary figure Samuel Johnson that he always had to win an argument. So much so that *"if his pistol misfires, he knocks you down with the butt end of it!"* That's what Job's so called friends are doing here. To protect God's honour. To justify their beliefs. They are taking down the man they came to comfort. And so in chapters 4 to 31 we see this cycle of each of the friends having their say and Job replying. It goes through one whole round of speeches, with no one getting anywhere. It goes through a second round, with still little progress being made and Eliphaz and Bildad have a third crack until it all runs out of puff.

They all lose patience with each other. But in the midst of his anger, his pain, his suffering and frustration we see God is doing something in Job's life. Planting seeds that will grow over time. We see that Job continues to talk with his friends and he continues to wrestle with his God. He needs God's presence more than anything else in this time of suffering. He needs God's help. He needs God's word. He needs God's promises.

Slide 20

So he says in Job 13:20-22 *"Only grant me these two things, God, and then I will not hide from you:*

*<sup>21</sup> Withdraw your hand far from me, and stop frightening me with your terrors. <sup>22</sup> Then summon me and I*

*will answer, or let me speak, and you reply to me.”* God must be behind his suffering but he also knows that God is the only solution to his suffering. And so he continues to pray and pray and pray.

Slide 21

In the words of Daniel Estes *“Job casts himself completely on God expecting that He will not reject him for his honest, hard questions and deeply troubling fears. Job recognises that the omniscient God knows and sees all things, so what he says is known by God already.”*

Slide 22

In the midst of Job’s darkness there is also still hope. Job 13:15 *“Though he slay me, yet will I hope in him, I will surely defend my ways to his face. <sup>16</sup> Indeed, this will turn out for my deliverance.”* And Job begins to look for help. A mediator. A redeemer. Someone who will step in for him and help resolve the situation. Who will stand up in court and plead his case.

Slide 23

*“Oh, that my words were recorded, that they were written on a scroll, <sup>24</sup> that they were inscribed with an iron tool on lead, or engraved in rock forever! <sup>25</sup> I know that my redeemer lives, and that in the end he will stand on the earth. <sup>26</sup> And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God; <sup>27</sup> I myself will see him with my own eyes—I, and not another. How my heart yearns within me!”* And who is this Redeemer, it is Lord Himself!

Slide 24

3. So let’s step back for a few moments. What is **the problem with it** (Job’s friends)? Well firstly there is no sympathy. Job’s friends were so concerned with truth that they forgot to speak the truth in love. They got so angry with what Job said they felt they must defend God’s honour and they forgot about comforting their friend. In the final analysis they are more attached to their theories, their theology than to their friend. But as Warren Wiersbe once said *“You don’t heal a broken heart with logic”*

Slide 25

No sympathy and secondly no Satan. Both Job and his friends don’t know what we know that God is not using Job as target practise but he has allowed Satan to attack and tempt and destroy the faith of one of God’s faithful servant. This suffering is not due to sin but Satan. Satan is attacking God through Job. Satan wants Job to give up on his faith and God is sure that Job won’t. Knowing that Satan exists is a game changer. God can still be sovereign, still wise, still holy, still in control and yet evil can still happen in our world and in our lives.

Slide 26

No sympathy, no Satan and lastly no salvation. In the very beginning of the book we see Job made sacrifices for his sons and daughters, just in case they sinned. Job knew that God can bring about forgiveness, through sacrifice. God can change the equation sowing = reaping. What you & I need to continually remember is that as we hear what Job’s friends say we can get out our pencils and give much of their words a tick. But we can’t fail to forget the cross.

Slide 27

Job’s experience only makes sense in the light of the cross of Christ. At the cross we see a truly innocent man suffer terribly. At the cross we see Satan throw everything at Jesus including the kitchen sink. We see injustice from the Romans, bad theology from the Jews, abandonment from the disciples and harsh words from the crowds. But at the cross we see God’s HOLINESS in that he does something about sin and evil. We see God’s JUSTICE as the sins of the world are paid for by the death of his son Jesus. We see God’s POWER as he raises Jesus back to life and we see God’s WISDOM as God find a way, an amazing way to deal perfectly with sin and find a way for his grace to be made available to his children.

Slide 28

#### 4. The Fulfilment of It

At the cross God modifies the equation you reap what you sow. For if we put our trust in God. If we reach out to God in our suffering, if we don’t despair but continue in prayer, if we have the hope of the gospel, if we find in Jesus our mediator and our redeemer then we will not reap what we sow. Jesus will reap what we sowed. And we will reap what Jesus sowed.



That's what GRACE is all about. God loves us so much that he sits with us in our pain. He places himself between Satan and us to protect us from the evil one. He understands the tough times that we go through, he answers our prayer to never leave us or forsake us. And that gives us hope. No matter what the world throws at us, no matter what Satan puts on our plate, no matter what consequences our sins deserve, our hope is that God is so committed to us that he will use everything to bring about his plans & purposes.

Slide 30

So where does that leave us? On his Christmas Day broadcast in 1939 King George VI encouraged his people in the midst of the darkness of WW2 by saying this "And I said to the man who stood at the gate of the year; 'Give me a light that I may tread safely into the unknown. ' And he replied" 'Go out into the darkness and put your hand into the hand of God. That shall be to you better than light and safer than a known way."

Finally what could you and I do and say when we find our friends and family suffering terribly. We can sit with them, we can listen to them, we can sympathise with them, we can gently point them to Jesus suffering on the cross. He knows what they are going through. And we can say to them. Put your hand into Jesus hand. He will look after you. He will carry you if necessary. He is all you need.

## **Song – Grace Alone**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jG--heg6m68>

## **Song – Amazing Grace**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3G72NucLEGM>

## **Benediction.**

Remember that we don't always get what we deserve, but instead we have the joy of living under God's grace. So today, go out into the world relying on his grace, knowing that Grace and peace are yours in abundance, through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.

## **Morning Tea**

Our morning tea is a vital way that we give and receive fellowship during a time like this. We don't want to be just consumers of Church, we want to be a part of the family of God. So why not give one or two people a call. Who might your ring now?