

Sunday August 8, 2021

Service for Swansea & Charlestown Presbyterian Church

Welcome & Prayer

Welcome to Church. Today we have another chance to come to our great and mighty God and worship the king of Kings and the Lord of Lords. As we prepare to do so let us turn to Psalm 91 and remind us ourselves why this is such a good thing to do.

Psalm 91. *"Whoever dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty. ²I will say of the LORD, 'He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust.' ³Surely he will save you from the fowler's snare and from the deadly pestilence. ⁴He will cover you with his feathers, and under his wings you will find refuge; his faithfulness will be your shield and rampart. ⁵You will not fear the terror of night, nor the arrow that flies by day, ⁶nor the pestilence that stalks in the darkness, nor the plague that destroys at midday. ⁷A thousand may fall at your side, ten thousand at your right hand, but it will not come near you. ⁸You will only observe with your eyes and see the punishment of the wicked. ⁹If you say, 'The LORD is my refuge,' and you make the Most High your dwelling, ¹⁰no harm will overtake you, no disaster will come near your tent. ¹¹For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways; ¹²they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone ¹³You will tread on the lion and the cobra; you will trample the great lion and the serpent. ¹⁴'Because he loves me,' says the LORD, 'I will rescue him; I will protect him, for he acknowledges my name. ¹⁵He will call on me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble, I will deliver him and honour him. ¹⁶With long life I will satisfy him and show him my salvation.'"*

Let us pray. *Father we thank you for church this morning. Whether we are seated at home or in the building together, we thank you for the salvation we enjoy. Forgive us for the times this week when we have forgotten your goodness and greatness. We are sinful. We are selfish. We deserve to face the storm of your justice and wrath. Lord, we ask for your mercy and grace. We thank you that Christ bore the judgement we deserve, in his body, on the tree, but then three days later, rose from death, victorious, the risen, conquering king. We thank you for our forgiveness. We thank you for our assurance of salvation. We thank you that heaven is our home. Who else could rescue me from my failing? Who else would offer His only Son? Who else invites me to call Him Father Only a Holy God. Amen*

Song –How great thou art

[How Great Thou Art with lyrics performed by Chris Rice - YouTube](#)

Bible Reading – Ezekiel 4:1-17 (NIV)

"Now, son of man, take a block of clay, put it in front of you and draw the city of Jerusalem on it. ²Then lay siege to it: Erect siege works against it, build a ramp up to it, set up camps against it and put battering rams around it. ³Then take an iron pan, place it as an iron wall between you and the city and turn your face toward it. It will be under siege, and you shall besiege it. This will be a sign to the people of Israel.

⁴"Then lie on your left side and put the sin of the people of Israel upon yourself. ^[a] You are to bear their sin for the number of days you lie on your side. ⁵I have assigned you the same number of days as the years of their sin. So for 390 days you will bear the sin of the people of Israel. ⁶"After you have finished this, lie down again, this time on your right side, and bear the sin of the people of Judah. I have assigned you 40 days, a day for each year. ⁷Turn your face toward the siege of Jerusalem and with bared arm prophesy against her. ⁸I will tie you up with ropes so that you cannot turn from one side to the other until you have finished the days of your siege.

⁹ "Take wheat and barley, beans and lentils, millet and spelt; put them in a storage jar and use them to make bread for yourself. You are to eat it during the 390 days you lie on your side. ¹⁰ Weigh out twenty shekels of food to eat each day and eat it at set times. ¹¹ Also measure out a sixth of a hin of water and drink it at set times. ¹² Eat the food as you would a loaf of barley bread; bake it in the sight of the people, using human excrement for fuel." ¹³ The LORD said, "In this way the people of Israel will eat defiled food among the nations where I will drive them." ¹⁴ Then I said, "Not so, Sovereign LORD! I have never defiled myself. From my youth until now I have never eaten anything found dead or torn by wild animals. No impure meat has ever entered my mouth." ¹⁵ "Very well," he said, "I will let you bake your bread over dung instead of human excrement." ¹⁶ He then said to me: "Son of man, I am about to cut off the food supply in Jerusalem. The people will eat rationed food in anxiety and drink rationed water in despair, ¹⁷ for food and water will be scarce. They will be appalled at the sight of each other and will waste away because of their sin.

Talk 1 – Not a game of charades! (Stephen T) <https://youtu.be/83msufgwVFY>

Charades used to be a game that you would play at parties or at youth groups or at Church camps. Each person would take turns in communicating to the rest of the group a saying or a sentence or a movie title without words, only actions. There were exaggerated gestures or facial expressions and it was always a lot of fun. And some people were really, really good at it. They could communicate an awful lot without words.

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And sometimes God asked his prophets to communicate their sermons or their prophecies without words as well. So in the time of King Jeroboam, the prophet Ahijah took a new cloak and tore it into twelve pieces and gave Jeroboam 10 of the pieces as a way of saying he would rule over 10 of the 12 tribes of Israel. Hosea is to marry a prostitute who will subsequently walk away from him & most famously Isaiah walks around barefoot & naked to show the people of God how they would be completely humiliated as they went into exile

And the tradition continues with the prophet Ezekiel. In chapters 4 & 5 Ezekiel is called to give four visual sermons to his people who are currently in exile in Babylon. Four divinely initiated actions that would speak to the people of God, the word of God. Beginning with

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1. A sermon on **the siege (verses 1-3)**

"Now, son of man, take a block of clay, put it in front of you and draw the city of Jerusalem on it. ² Then lay siege to it: Erect siege works against it, build a ramp up to it, set up camps against it and put battering rams around it."

For all those who played toy soldiers as a kid or liked to make things out of Lego this is your justification from Scripture. Ezekiel is in his house according to chapter 3 or maybe in the open space just outside of his house and he is to get a large brick, which in those days was made with clay, and scratch on the surface a map of Jerusalem. Without a word and as a crowd gathers around him, he places the brick on a rock as Jerusalem was a city up high and starts piling up the dirt on each side. And making models of siege towers and ramps.

According to Assyrian records this is what modern warfare looked like in those times. Some cities were almost impossible to overthrow, so you hemmed people in, you starved them out, you bit by bit did what you could to break down the walls or climb over the walls. And some of these sieges went on to last years.

Ezekiel's sermon is saying to the people of God, you might now be in exile from your homeland but there is more judgement to come on the people of God. Jerusalem will fall. The Temple and all that is in it will be

destroyed. So don't pine for the good old days. Don't wish you were still back home. For there is worse to come. And who is the one that will bring this destruction on the city of God? Why it is God Himself.

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³“Then take an iron pan, place it as an iron wall between you and the city and turn your face toward it. It will be under siege, and you shall besiege it. This will be a sign to the people of Israel.” Now there is no mention of Babylon, or Nebuchadnezzar or any other foe here because the real enemy is not them but God Himself. He is the one who is besieging the city. He is the one who had put a wall of steel between the city and Himself. There is a battle of attrition and then secondly a bed of woe.

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2. A siege, then a sin-bearing (Verses 4-8)

For Ezekiel then moves onto his next sermon and it is a 430 day long sermon. Now please don't ever complain when I preach for 25 minutes or I might instead adopt Ezekiel's tactic of preaching the same sermon all day, every day, over and over for some 430 days!

⁴“Then lie on your left side & put the sin of the people of Israel upon yourself. You are to bear their sin for the number of days you lie on your side. ⁵I have assigned you the same number of days as the years of their sin. So for 390 days you will bear the sin of the people of Israel. ⁶“After you have finished this, lie down again, this time on your right side & bear the sin of the people of Judah. I have assigned you 40 days, a day for each year. ⁷Turn your face to the siege of Jerusalem & with bared arm prophesy against her. I will tie you up with ropes so that you cannot turn from one side to the other until you have finished the days of your siege.”

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Ezekiel, the priest turned prophet does a symbolic action where the sin of the people is not transferred to a lamb without blemish or a scape goat and led out of the city, it is given to a man. Transferred to Ezekiel the man of God himself. He bears the sin of the people of God. So he does that symbolically on day one and to make sure everyone gets the message fully he ties himself up with a rope so they know he is bound by their sin.

And then he does it again on day 2, day 10, day 100, day 365, day 390. Each day represents a year that the northern kingdom has piled their sins up and up against God. From the time of Rehoboam to the fall of the city of Samaria. And if that isn't enough, Ezekiel then lies not on his left side but on his right side and he does the same thing for another 40 years. Just like Israel were in the desert for 40 years because of their sin before they entered into the promised land. Just like they were under God's punishment until that whole generation passed away, so Ezekiel bears his people's punishment. He is bound. He suffers on behalf of others the punishment that God is afflicting on his people.

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3. Siege, Sin-bearing and then starving (verse 9-11)

⁹“Take wheat and barley, beans and lentils, millet and spelt; put them in a storage jar and use them to make bread for yourself. You are to eat it during the 390 days you lie on your side. ¹⁰Weigh out twenty shekels of food to eat each day and eat it at set times. ¹¹Also measure out a sixth of a hin of water and drink it at set times.”

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Ezekiel is placed on starvation rations. For when a city is under siege, the food runs out very quickly and you have to eat whatever you can get your hands on. So this isn't some classy multi-grain loaf that Ezekiel is to bake he is just mixing together whatever he can lay his hands upon. Grains and veggies together into a mixture and baking a loaf of just 230 grams in weight and that is all that he will get to eat for the day. Along with just 700mls of water. Not nearly enough in the midst of a hot and dry climate.

Most of us will never have gone through this ourselves but World Vision tells us that 690

million people go to bed on an empty stomach each night. 690 million! And here is the prophet day after day, night after night starving and thirsty. Because there is a famine in the land. Because God is punishing his people for their sin. And God's representative enters the suffering of his people. But it is about to get a whole lot worse. A bread of affliction, a bed of woe, a battle of attrition and finally baking over dung.

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4. Siege, Sin-bearing, Starving and finally Soiled. (verses 12-17)

For how is Ezekiel going to bake his bread? Well often poor people don't have access to wood for a fire so they use dried manure. But the prophet is to use his own excrement, his own poo. How disgusting is that? Think of the smell and how it would affect the taste of the bread. But it is more than just that. It is unclean. And that means that Ezekiel is continually unclean before God. Not right with God. As if everything else was not bad enough, this sermon tells the people of God that they will now be permanently separately from God.

So, Ezekiel says, "God, enough is enough!" I will play toy soldiers, I will lie on my side without moving for over a year, I will be on starvation rations but cooking with my own dried poo is a bridge too far. There is only so much you can ask me to do!" So God graciously grants Ezekiel's request & instead of his own poo he can use cattle poo instead. Not much of an accommodation but he does listen to Ezekiel and He does make it a touch easier for him.

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And so here in the Bible are symbolic sermons telling the people of God, day after day after day that God's punishment is coming. Their homes will be placed under siege, their sin is weighing heavily upon them, there will be starvation and they are now so unclean and soiled that they can no longer stand before God, at all. And they see this truth in action. And the prophet Ezekiel is to feel this truth in real life. This is what is to come. Twice.

Twice? Because just a couple of years later what Ezekiel prophesied did come on the people of God in Jerusalem. They were under siege for their sin, they were starved and soiled and suffered terribly. They got what they deserved. And then it happened a second time. The people of God the Jews and the Romans lay siege to God's son Jesus. And they nailed him to the cross and he bore the sins of his people on his body. And he was hungry and thirsty. And he became unclean and separated from His Father God.

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In the greatest ever symbolic sermon Jesus receives the punishment due to God's people & he takes it on himself. In the cross of Christ God communicates in a visual way his deep hatred for sin & his amazing love for his people. At the cross we see the weight of our sin. At the cross we feel the weight of our sin. And we are thankful that he was there in our place.

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And so that we don't ever forget that truth, God sends us two more symbolic sermons. One when we start our walk & the other as we continue our walk with God. When we start our walk with God we have the sacrament of baptism. A symbol that as we go under the water we die with Christ and as we come up out of the water we live for Christ. A symbol that just as the blood of the old covenant sprinkled on the altar made it now clean, so the water sprinkled on our head now makes us clean before God.

And when we take part in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper we remember his body was broken for us & his blood was shed for us. And we are to eat & drink of him & only him until he comes again in glory. And these things are not just a game of charades. They are not just play acting. They teach us deep spiritual truths. They take us time & time again to the cross.

Which would you prefer the reality or the symbol? Well Ezekiel shows us the symbol of God's judgement so that we might miss out on reality of God's judgement. And Jesus shows us the reality of God's judgement

so that we might avoid god's judgement completely. So the symbol we need to keep looking toward is the cross. A symbol of punishment and grace.

Song – Jesus Thank you

[Jesus, Thank You \(feat. Brook Hills Music\) - Official Lyric Video - YouTube](#)

Announcements

Focus for August - Outreach. Evangelism is hard. People in Australia seem so hard don't they? How do we persevere in sharing the message of Jesus? Especially when we see so little results? We need to remember who does what. In Acts 16 we read about the conversion of Lydia. In verse 14 we're told how it happened: "The Lord opened her heart to pay attention to what was said by Paul." Paul faithfully shared the message of Christ. The Lord opened her heart to receive it and be converted. So let's not be confused! Let's not get discouraged, but press on! And keep sowing knowing that God's word always achieves His purposes (Isaiah 55:11).

QR Codes. Thank you for all those who are using their QR codes to sign in. It really helps us confirm to the NSW government regulations. If you can't sign in by yourself, please speak to the people on the door about how we can help you out in the future.

Hunter Men's Convention. Saturday 11th September 8:30-3pm @ Grace Evangelical Church. Speaker: Simon Manchester. Topic Ezekiel (is God trying to say something to us) Cost \$30. The capacity is only 104 this year because of COVID restrictions so if you would like to come you will need to get in fast!

Invitation Service. On 29th August we are planning to have a series of invitation services, where we can invite our unsaved friends and family along. Why not pick a person and start praying for them now? Why not ask the Lord to open their heart to respond to the gospel in faith and repentance?

Kid's Spot: As we continue our journey through the book of Revelation, we will be challenged to live as God's holy people from Revelation 2:18-29 and 3:1-6. God has separated us from all our sin so we can now live as his holy people. Question of the week: What are ways we can stand out as different in our world because we love Jesus?

Snow gums memory verse challenge for the week: God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who trusts in him will have eternal life. John 3:16

Next Week. Stephen is currently going through the book of Ezekiel on Sunday mornings. Next week he comes to Ezekiel 16 a very difficult and disturbing passage which may well shock us. So please be ready for some hard words to be said by the Lord to each of us and so we would encourage you to prepare your hearts and minds in readiness for next week's sermon. It is not recommended for children!

Mission Aviation Fellowship. See Sam's video. https://youtu.be/bL3MRWg_1Hc

Prayer Points for 8th August 2021

A Prayer based on Psalm 110: "The Lord has sworn forever and will not change his mind, "You are a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek." (Ps. 110:4). This is the most quoted Psalm in the New Testament. It is the ultimate Messianic psalm. Christ is the ultimate prophet, priest and king. We need a priest. We need a king. We need a prophet. And we have all of that in Christ! Let's not forget whose we are and who we pray to!

Pray for Iran. Population: 82,021,564. Muslim 99.4% and 89.6% unreached. Pray for a great harvest resulting from faithful believers sharing bold accounts of their faith. Pray for the church to rapidly multiply and mature despite horrendous persecution against non-Muslim peoples. Pray for Christians to capitalise on unprecedented opportunities to spread the Gospel via Internet, TV, and media.

Pray for Josh Montzka. Thank God for Josh's unique gifts and passion for reaching people for Christ online. Pray for the Son Project to go ahead. And for financial support that will contribute to making the project compelling and effective.

Personal and Family – Remember the children in lockdown, who are unable to go to school and Sunday school, or to meet with their friends. Pray especially for those in poorer households with more limited facilities. Pray for the Hunter as it goes into lockdown and has its freedoms restricted for the good of others.

Pray for the fearful. The media perpetuates fearfulness. Pray people would not stare at their screens and be filled with fear and anxiety. But we would behold the glory of Christ and be transformed into His image (2 Cor. 3:18).

Bible Reading – Ezekiel 10:1-19 (NIV)

I looked, and I saw the likeness of a throne of lapis lazuli above the vault that was over the heads of the cherubim. ²The LORD said to the man clothed in linen, “Go in among the wheels beneath the cherubim. Fill your hands with burning coals from among the cherubim and scatter them over the city.” And as I watched, he went in. ³Now the cherubim were standing on the south side of the temple when the man went in, and a cloud filled the inner court. ⁴Then the glory of the LORD rose from above the cherubim and moved to the threshold of the temple. The cloud filled the temple, and the court was full of the radiance of the glory of the LORD. ⁵The sound of the wings of the cherubim could be heard as far away as the outer court, like the voice of God Almighty when he speaks.

⁶When the LORD commanded the man in linen, “Take fire from among the wheels, from among the cherubim,” the man went in and stood beside a wheel. ⁷Then one of the cherubim reached out his hand to the fire that was among them. He took up some of it and put it into the hands of the man in linen, who took it and went out. ⁸(Under the wings of the cherubim could be seen what looked like human hands. ⁹I looked, and I saw beside the cherubim four wheels, one beside each of the cherubim; the wheels sparkled like topaz. ¹⁰As for their appearance, the four of them looked alike; each was like a wheel intersecting a wheel. ¹¹As they moved, they would go in any one of the four directions the cherubim faced; the wheels did not turn about as the cherubim went. The cherubim went in whatever direction the head faced, without turning as they went. ¹²Their entire bodies, including their backs, their hands and their wings, were completely full of eyes, as were their four wheels. ¹³I heard the wheels being called “the whirling wheels.” ¹⁴Each of the cherubim had four faces: One face was that of a cherub, the second the face of a human being, the third the face of a lion, and the fourth the face of an eagle.

¹⁵Then the cherubim rose upward. These were the living creatures I had seen by the Kebar River. ¹⁶When the cherubim moved, the wheels beside them moved; and when the cherubim spread their wings to rise from the ground, the wheels did not leave their side. ¹⁷When the cherubim stood still, they also stood still; and when the cherubim rose, they rose with them, because the spirit of the living creatures was in them.

¹⁸Then the glory of the LORD departed from over the threshold of the temple and stopped above the cherubim. ¹⁹While I watched, the cherubim spread their wings and rose from the ground, and as they went, the wheels went with them. They stopped at the entrance of the east gate of the LORD’s house, and the glory of the God of Israel was above them.

Talk II – God Departs (Stephen T) <https://youtu.be/RiJggDcVWOI>

“Go away. I don’t want to ever see you again.” These are terrible words. Words that kids can say to others in the playground. Words that business partners who have a falling out can say to each other. Words that former lovers that are hurt by each other can say to one another.

But God would never say those words, would he? God would never, ever walk away from His people, would he? He is a God of love, a God of grace, a God of mercy. God would never tell us to go away, would he? Well in chapter 10, God leaves his people. God pulls up stumps and walks away. God’s glory leaves the

Temple, leaves the city of Jerusalem and heads toward the east. Will he ever return? Is this the end for land of Israel? Well before we get to the answer to those questions let's look at Ezekiel chapters 6 to 9 to see what causes God to go. What was the final straw for Him to decide he has no choice but to depart? It's because

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1. God's ways are rejected (chapters 6-9)

Now we didn't read all the chapters in our passage today. But maybe you could do that when you get back home. But they are not easy reading. The first half of Ezekiel is all about God's judgement. Wave after wave washes over the people of God. Storm after storm strikes them in the first 24 chapters & it is all because of their sin. God's judgement comes because God is a God of justice & Israel is getting just what they deserve. No more. No less.

In chapter 6 we see that the people of God have been worshipping gods other than the one true God. They turned away from the ways of the Lord. They have made for themselves idols. And they have worshipped them. In the mountains. In the valleys. Even in the holy places. God's people have rejected God's ways.

What's more, according to Ezekiel 7, the land has become full of violence. Making money has become their highest gain. Pride in oneself has taken over. But it gets worse. According to chapter 8 and 9 God's people have defiled God's temple, the place where God promised always to dwell with them. So right under God's nose they are bowing down to the sun & worshipping the gods of the nations around them.

How dare they. Even after all the prophets that God has sent them to bring them back. Even after all the kings and priests. Even after the law and the scriptures. Even after saving them and giving them a land and a temple. And then in recent years God has even sent them the Babylonians to warn them, to shock them, to bring them back to the fold. Yet even after all this, there were the people of God still rejecting the ways of God.

So in chapter 9 God sends a man clothed in linen. And he goes throughout the city and puts a mark on the forehead of all those who are grieving over the sins of their nation, all those who have kept themselves pure. God ensures these people will be protected when

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2. God's judgement comes. (Chapter 10)

Ezekiel has a second vision concerning the glory of God and the chariot of the Lord. But this time God's presence is not coming but going. Slide 4 *"I looked, and I saw the likeness of a throne of sapphire above the vault that was over the heads of the Cherubim. The Lord said to the man clothed in linen, "Go in among the wheels beneath the cherubim. Fill your hands with burning coals from among the cherubim and scatter them over the city."*

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God's throne is filled with wonder and it is also filled with hot coals. In Isaiah 6, these coals came to the prophet to cleanse his lips, and purified his words. But this time they are not to refine but to destroy. The man scatters these coals amongst the city. God's wrath is now being poured out on Jerusalem in a similar way to when he poured it out on Sodom and Gomorrah. And it starts with the Temple of God, the very place where His glory has rested.

And there is no escape as Ezekiel again describes the throne of God and its wheels. That can move in any direction. And the Cherubim. Which can move across the ground and even fly in the air. There is no place this judgement cannot go. On earth or in sky. So the coals are deposited far and wide. The smoke goes up. Until there will be nothing left. Nothing at all!

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3. And finally God's glory departs. (Chapter 10-1)

Verse 4. *“Then the glory of the LORD rose from above the cherubim and moved to the threshold of the temple. The cloud filled the temple, and the court was full of the radiance of the glory of the LORD. ⁵ The sound of the wings of the cherubim could be heard as far away as the outer court, like the voice of God Almighty when he speaks.”*

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Then from the edge of the temple God's glory moves again. Verse 18, *“Then the glory of the LORD departed from over the threshold of the temple & stopped above the cherubim. ¹⁹ While I watched, the cherubim spread their wings and rose from the ground, and as they went, the wheels went with them. They stopped at the entrance of the east gate of the LORD's house, and the glory of the God of Israel was above them.”* And then in chapter 11:22, *“Then the cherubim, with the wheels beside them, spread their wings, and the glory of the God of Israel was above them. ²³ The glory of the LORD went up from within the city and stopped above the mountain east of it.”*

God is going out in a blaze of glory. God is calling his glory home away from the Temple, away from Jerusalem, away from the people that had rejected him time and time again. It was like God was saying, “Go away, I don't want to see you again.” Except Jerusalem was staying and God was the one departing. The privilege of having God's presence among his people was now being taken away from them. God had finished with Jerusalem.

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And for Ezekiel this was the worst possible outcome, the worst judgement of all. *“For the judgement of God who is present, however terrible, is surely preferable to the absence of God”* writes the OT commentator Peter Craigie. You know things are bad in a marriage when one of the partners gets up and leaves and takes all their stuff with them. Here we see God getting up and leaving his own home to get away from his bride the people of Israel.

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Friends we need to remember that one of the most treasured gifts we can ever possibly have is God's presence in our lives. Bible writers talk again and again about God being with his people. Matthew 28:20 says God is with us. According to Psalm 34:7 “God is around us”. John 14:17 declares that “God is in us.” Psalm 46:5 exclaims that “God is in the midst of us.” He is also underneath us (Deut 33:27), near us (Psalm 148:14), and before us (John 10:4).

So what is hell? It is the absence of God. The absence of anything that is good. Everything that is good. And for Ezekiel it must have been truly devastating. Not only had he and his fellow exiles been expelled from the city of God, Jerusalem. Now God was expelling himself.

But the question is, has he gone permanently? Will God ever return to his temple, his city, his people? Well after the exile, the Jews in Nehemiah and Ezra's time build the second Temple. But it is never said that God's glory dwells in that Temple. And it is later destroyed by the Greeks. And many years later King Herod builds a third temple. But it is never said that God's glory dwells in that Temple either. And it too is destroyed by the Romans in 70 AD. It seems the temple and the city of Jerusalem are finished in God's eyes. Finished.

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Except the apostle John writing in his gospel says this about Jesus. ¹⁴ *“The Word became flesh & made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.”* God's glory does return but not to a building or a city but in a person. A person who lived for 33 years in Israel but now lives and rules over the entire earth. Jesus is the glory of God in human form. God might depart in Ezekiel's time but he returns in the person of Jesus. And it is this Jesus who says to his disciples “I will never leave you nor forsake you”

But. But the Bible ends with a series of warnings. Jesus might not ever leave His church but he might still leave our Church. There is no guarantee that he will always be with the Charlestown Presbyterian Church. There is no guarantee that Jesus won't depart from your family no matter how many generations of Christians your family might have had in the past. God has plenty of sons and daughters but no grandchildren. Each one of us need to walk with Jesus, to teach and model the next generation after us to also walk with Jesus.

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God's presence doesn't stay with us automatically. Listen to these words to the seven Church of Asia in the book of Revelation. For example the Church of Smyrna, *"Yet I hold this against you: You have forsaken the love you had at first. ⁵ Consider how far you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first. If you do not repent, I will come to you and remove your lamp stand from its place."* Or even worse the Church of Laodicea, *¹⁵ I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other! ¹⁶ So, because you are lukewarm—neither hot nor cold—I am about to spit you out of my mouth."*

But the letter to the Church of Laodicea still ends with this wonderful promise. *¹⁹ "Those whom I love I rebuke & discipline. So be earnest and repent. ²⁰ Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me ²¹ To the one who is victorious, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne."*

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On the last day God will depart from some. And God will allow others to sit on the throne with Jesus. So make sure you know today where your eternal destiny lies. Whether God will say to you Go away. Or come to me. For it doesn't depend upon on your goodness or your heritage but your repentance and faith in Jesus Christ.

Song – Never Alone

[Never Alone \(Acoustic Song Leading Video\) - Emu Music - YouTube](#)

Benediction

¹⁹ "Those whom I love I rebuke & discipline. So be earnest and repent. ²⁰ Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me ²¹ To the one who is victorious, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne."

Morning Tea

There is no physical morning tea allowed at the moment but why not give someone a call instead? Who might your ring now?