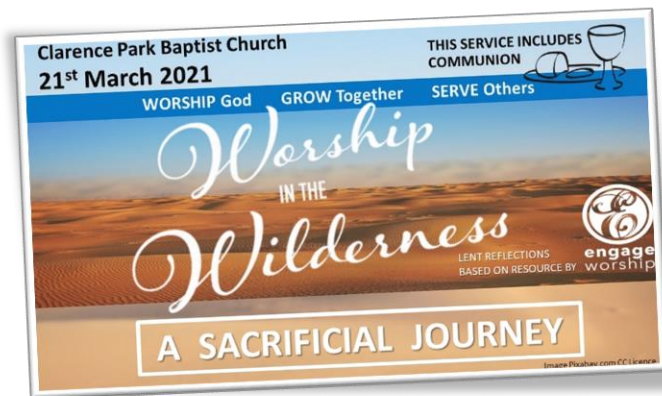


Clarence Park Baptist Church

Question for Week following service 14th March 2021



Big Idea of the Series

Everyone one of us will experience times of wilderness in our lives. These are the times of loss and hardship perhaps caused by bereavement, a loss of employment, broken relationships, illness or loneliness and isolation. What does God want to teach us through these situations?

And how can they help us to grow not just closer to God but deeper in our worship to him?

(this series is based on resources by engageworship.com)

Week 4 – A SACRIFICIAL Journey

Isaiah 53, Romans 12:1-2, Hebrews 13:11-16, Matthew 14

Preparation

1. Watch the sermon from the church YouTube channel: <https://youtu.be/vb4eZUQKq4>
2. Read the passages on the next page and reflect on the questions before meeting with the rest of the group to explore your journeys together

Group Study

- Begin with a time of prayer – asking God to help you learn something new

Readings:

Isaiah 53 New International Version - UK (NIVUK)

53 Who has believed our message

and to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?

²He grew up before him like a tender shoot, and like a root out of dry ground.

He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him,
nothing in his appearance that we should desire him.

³He was despised and rejected by mankind, a man of suffering, and familiar with pain.

Like one from whom people hide their faces
he was despised, and we held him in low esteem.

⁴Surely he took up our pain and bore our suffering,
yet we considered him punished by God, stricken by him, and afflicted.

⁵But he was pierced for our transgressions,
he was crushed for our iniquities;
the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed.

⁶We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way;
and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

⁷He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth;
he was led like a lamb to the slaughter,
and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth.

⁸By oppression and judgment he was taken away.
Yet who of his generation protested?
For he was cut off from the land of the living;
for the transgression of my people he was punished.

⁹He was assigned a grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death,
though he had done no violence, nor was any deceit in his mouth.

¹⁰Yet it was the LORD's will to crush him and cause him to suffer,
and though the LORD makes his life an offering for sin,
he will see his offspring and prolong his days,
and the will of the LORD will prosper in his hand.

¹¹After he has suffered, he will see the light of life and be satisfied;
by his knowledge my righteous servant will justify many,
and he will bear their iniquities.

¹²Therefore I will give him a portion among the great,
and he will divide the spoils with the strong,
because he poured out his life unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors.
For he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

Romans 12:1-2 New International Version - UK (NIVUK)

A living sacrifice

12 Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God – this is your true and proper worship. ²Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is – his good, pleasing and perfect will.

New International Version - UK (NIVUK)

Holy Bible, New International Version® Anglicized, NIV® Copyright © 1979, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.® Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.

Hebrews 13:11-16 New International Version - UK (NIVUK)

¹¹The high priest carries the blood of animals into the Most Holy Place as a sin offering, but the bodies are burned outside the camp. ¹²And so Jesus also suffered outside the city gate to make the people holy through his own blood. ¹³Let us, then, go to him outside the camp, bearing the disgrace he bore. ¹⁴For here we do not have an enduring city, but we are looking for the city that is to come. ¹⁵Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise – the fruit of lips that openly profess his name. ¹⁶And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.

New International Version - UK (NIVUK)

Holy Bible, New International Version® Anglicized, NIV® Copyright © 1979, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.® Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.

Questions for discussion / Reflection

Reflect and share your experiences together using the following questions.

Take time at the end to ask what is God teaching you this week to help you grow as a disciple of Jesus?

1. Is there anything from the readings or message this week that stood out to you?

2. Taking the words from Romans 12

- Why do you think that we are told to present our bodies to God and not simply our spirits?
- Why is the sacrifice of your life a small thing compared to the mercy of God?
(what is the core of our sacrifice and how does that differ to what Jesus has done for us?)
- How do you live like a sacrifice/ what does living a life of sacrifice in Romans 12 look like?
... at home... at work... amongst friends.. etc...

Does the comment in the box opposite help us to answer this question?

How/ why?

- What does the transforming of our minds mean?
How does Hebrews 13 help us to answer?

Any gift we give back to God, any "sacrifice", is only made possible by the grace of God in the first place. In Hebrews 13:15-16 the writer shows us how we can respond to the grace of God. Our own sacrifices, which we are encouraged to bring, are not in order to make ourselves holy and right with God, but instead are a grateful response to what Christ has already done.

3. In your own time Read Matthew 14

Jesus experienced many stressful events in his short life, but the death of John the Baptist must have hit him especially hard. His cousin and friend, perhaps the person who understood him most, was suddenly gone. The brutal fashion in which John's life had been cut short must have given Jesus pause for thought as well about the likely outcome of his own ministry. If Herod could chop someone's head off on a whim, what else was he capable of?

*"He withdrew by boat
privately to a solitary place.
Hearing of this,
the crowds followed him..."
(Matt 14:13)*

Jesus' response to this tragic event was to take himself away by boat, somewhere to grieve in private; into the wilderness. Even here, however, he was not left alone, but a large crowd had worked out where he was heading and followed on foot.

Instead of telling people to go away, or picking up his oars to row away somewhere different, Jesus "... had compassion on them and healed those who were ill." He then stayed with the crowd all day until late, and miraculously fed the thousands of people there with someone's packed lunch.

Jesus is an inspiration of sacrificial giving here - even in the midst of his own private sorrow, he has compassion on those who are suffering, and keeps on giving of himself.

- a) How do you respond when you are under intense pressure? Do you try to forget about the stress using outward things - a packed leisure schedule, shopping, food or alcohol, escapist film or TV? Or do you close yourself off to the world and sulk in isolation?
- b) How could you continue to change in order to have a more Christ like reaction?
- c) Are you willing to say this prayer for your own life?

Jesus, I feel I have so little in the face of the world's needs.

So little time, resources, compassion and energy.

There are times when I am overwhelmed

by my emotions and with the needs around me.

But you have all the resources, compassion and energy.

Help me to bring my bread and fish, my small contribution,

trusting you will multiply it and use it for your glory.

Amen

Prayer

Take some time to share prayer needs, pray for one another, for the church and for our local community before finishing with the words of the grace.