

# ONLINE SERVICE

Sunday 29 March 2020

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Welcome

Prayer of Invocation

Bible Reading: Matthew 5:2-12  
Read together

Young at Heart  
Word Study - Agape

Bible Reading: Matthew 6:1-4  
Christine Bradbeer

Sermon  
Love does not boast  
Matthew 6:1

Prayers of Intercession  
and  
The Lord's Prayer

Benediction



# NOTICES

29 March 2020

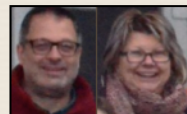
**Wednesday 1 April** 1.30 pm Covenanted Prayer Time  
(time to phone or SMS a neighbour)

**Sunday 5 April** Services suspended during the  
**COVID-19 CRISIS.**



FIND US Online! Go to [blackburnpc.org.au](http://blackburnpc.org.au) and click  
the Facebook button at the top of that page.

**For your prayers this week: Congregational  
member: Rodney Blackwood**



and **Eva and Laszlo Mihalyi**  
who minister with Pioneers in  
Hungary.

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MEMBERS who wish to continue their freewill  
offerings during the current crisis are reminded that  
they can use the electronic banking details at the  
bottom of this page.

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**GARDENIA ST**  
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH  
53 Gardenia Street,  
Blackburn 3130



Minister: Rev Graham Bradbeer  
tel. 9041 7911 mobile. 0409 978 690  
Session Clerk: Mr Keith Ferres 98305466  
Treasurer: Mr Vic Ansell 5447 7118

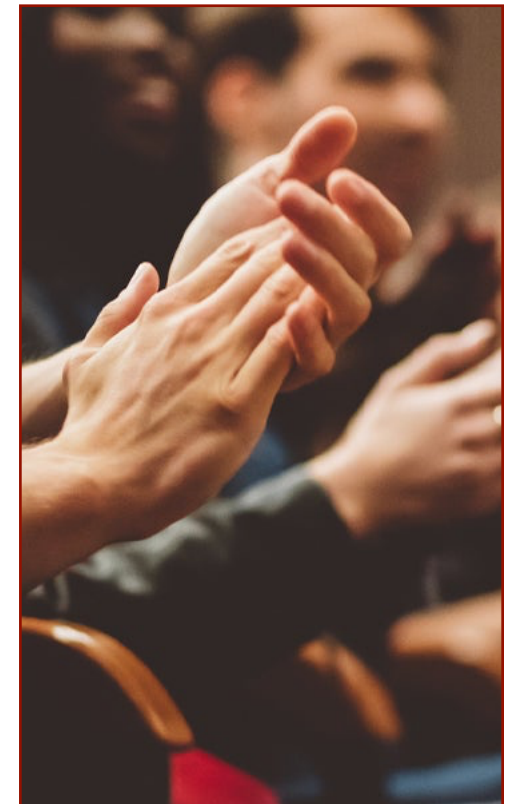
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Electronic Banking Details: ANZ Forest Hill,  
Account name: Blackburn Presbyterian Church  
BSB: 013-328. Account number: 2970 40694

# GARDENIA ST. PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH BLACKBURN

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29 March 2020



It might be good theatre, but the  
God who made you won't be  
applauding. Matthew 6:1

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# WELCOME



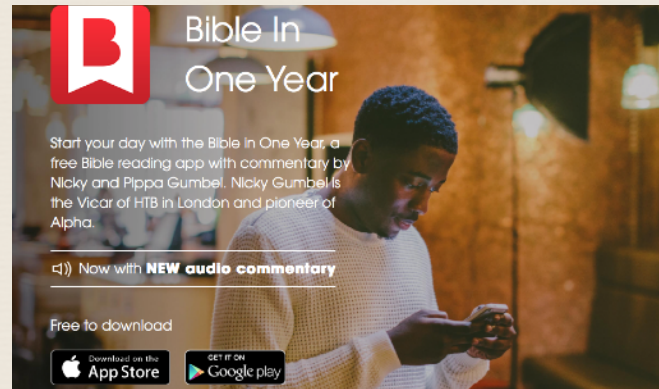
Security forces tortured and otherwise ill-treated activists, particularly by beating them. Authorities ordered the closure of nine Christian churches. Security forces arrested and detained thousands of sub-Saharan migrants, forcibly transferring some to the far south of Algeria and expelling others to other countries, allegedly without following due process in many cases. Women's rights groups were active in the Hirak movement, demanding an end to all forms of gender-based violence and the repeal of the Family Code, which discriminates against women in matters of inheritance, marriage, divorce, child custody and guardianship. Amnesty International 2019

In 2019, violence continued to increase in Algeria, and several churches were closed. Family members are the main driving force of persecution for Christian converts who often face violence, banishment, forced divorce, house arrest and loss over custody of their children.

Meeting together is difficult. Home churches are forbidden and carry a three-year prison sentence or a significant fine, though this law is yet to be enforced. Believers in rural or conservative Islamic regions face the greatest danger within their communities.

Following elections in December 2019 it is unclear how Algeria will fare under the leadership of President Tebboune. It is unlikely Christians will be granted more freedoms with laws restricting non-Muslim worship. Yet people are coming to faith, the church is growing, and Christians are becoming bolder in sharing the gospel.

Open Doors Australia



Jesus said it was most important **“That you love the Lord your God with all your passion and prayer and muscle and intelligence—and that you love your neighbour as well as you do yourself.”**

Consider the importance of staying connected with God and with your neighbour during this Coronavirus time of isolation and confinement.

## Sermon Notes:

## LOVE DOES NOT BOAST

Last week we heard Jesus say to his hearers, not merely that they should love their neighbour, but *'love your enemies'*. For his followers the bar is set high. Some say impossibly high. One thing is clear, he is looking for more *'righteousness'* than the routines of the scribes and Pharisees (5:20).

From this high point of the sermon Jesus proceeds to speak about what it will mean to take him seriously. Let us see where he leads us:

### 1. Putting on a performance.

It is in Shakespeare's *As You Like It* that we have the lines "All the world's a stage, and all the men and women merely players". There is an awful danger that our religious activity becomes a performance. That the privileges and responsibilities of our faith degenerate into mere ritual. This was a reason Jesus criticised the Pharisees and called for something different from his followers (Matthew 5:20).

### 2. Real religion, inside and out

We should be wholly engaged in the service of God and neighbour. Religion that is real is a matter of the heart, the head and the hands. In this section of his sermon Jesus speaks of good works (alms-giving compare James 1:27), prayer and fasting (personal reverence).

### 3. Dangers of fear and vanity

There is an apparent conflict between 5:15 and 6:1. Should our 'good deeds' be public or private? John Stott makes clear that there are two

sins addressed by Jesus words. The first is fear. We must not be intimidated when we need courage. The other is vanity. We must not seek applause. Says AB Bruce "show when tempted to *hide*... hide when tempted to *show*"

### 4. Applauding ourselves

Another colloquial saying has come from Jesus' remark about left hand not knowing what the right is doing. It's often misunderstood. It is not about poor communication, but rather about minimising the temptation to applaud one's own generous contribution to the work of God. We should not be seeking the praise of others, far less praising ourselves.

### 5. The consummate reward

God knows the heart. This is both humbling and reassuring. We do not need to approval of others if we are pleasing our heavenly father. We will indeed discover, as philanthropists tell us, that service and generosity provide an inherent reward.

But there is also the reward of pleasing our God. This is not, as CS Lewis explains (In the Weight of Glory) a prize granted for some effort of ours. Rather it is the thing we have sought all along. It is to "glorify God and enjoy him forever". (Westminster Catechism Q.1).