

# ONLINE SERVICE

Sunday 17 May 2020



Welcome  
Notices  
'Allemanda' - JS Bach  
Amanda Fairs, Viola  
Call to Worship  
Prayer of Invocation  
Young at Heart  
Christine Bradbeer  
Florence Nightingale  
Bible Reading: John 10:7-21  
Sonya Rutherford  
Sermon  
Beyond Covid: a road map  
Matthew 7:13,14  
Prayers of Intercession  
and  
The Lord's Prayer  
Adagio - Robert Valentine  
Amanda Fairs, Viola  
Benediction



## NOTICES

17 May 2020

Wednesday 16 May

1.30 pm Covenanted Prayer Time

Sunday 24 May

11 am Sermon on the Mount contd.



Streaming online during the  
COVID-19 crisis.

**Online** at [blackburnpc.org.au](http://blackburnpc.org.au) and click the Facebook button or  
<https://www.facebook.com/blackburnpresbyterian/>

**For your prayers this week:**

Congregational members:  
Will FINDLAY & Elise RUTHERFURD



and

B & P are currently on Home leave but when  
they return to the field they will minister with  
SIM in South Asia providing literacy skills and vocational training.

MEMBERS who wish to continue their freewill  
offerings may use the banking details at the bottom  
of this page or post to our Treasurer. Vic Ansell,  
59 Queen St Kangaroo Flat Vic 3555.

GARDENIA ST  
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH  
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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

17 May 2020



Don't look for shortcuts to God.

The market is flooded with surefire,  
easygoing formulas for a successful life  
that can be practiced in your spare time.

Don't fall for that stuff, even though  
crowds of people do. The way to life—to  
God!—is vigorous and requires total  
attention

# WELCOME



**W**ith a population of 1.4 billion (an estimated 97 million of whom are Christians) the situation for Christians can be very different in various parts of China.

However, it is correct to say that the situation for Christians has deteriorated all over China. The Chinese government wants to “sinicize” every religious ideology in the country—meaning, to make beliefs, including Christianity, fall in line with their interpretation of Communism.

Privacy in China is no longer guaranteed. An increase of surveillance and restriction of personal confidentiality have severely constrained the freedom of Christians in China. The Communist Party has taken control of all religious matters in the country, leading to intimidation and threats towards Christians.

Publicly expressing Christian views can result in interrogation, loss of property or imprisonment. Christian leaders are detained at police stations with increasing frequency, while elderly Christians can have their government assistance taken away for professing their faith.

Within Buddhist and Islamic communities conversion to Christianity is seen as a betrayal of the family and local village. A convert is seen as a disgrace and faces isolation. Meeting with other Christians is nearly impossible.

Open Doors

## Beyond Covid: Jesus’ road map.

Sermon  
Notes

**A**round the world governments imposed restrictions to slow and manage the spread of Novel Coronavirus, COVID 19. Eventually, as the situation came under control a mood of impatience with the need for personal distancing surged. This mood was rising in Australia and differences across the states enabled media reports to fan the frustration. This week restrictions began to be loosened in all Australian states.

We are all wondering what ‘new normal’ might mean. What lessons have shaped our road-map out? In the closing sections of the Sermon in the Mount Jesus also presents his listeners with a road map to the future.

### (a) two ways

The road map from here begins with the next step. Two ways forward have been set before us. How are the two routes described? We have been listening to all that Jesus has said and perhaps felt his intensely personal call. Jesus’ Beatitudes also draw on the devotion and piety of the humble in Israel? The blessings are for the “poor in spirit... those who mourn... the meek...”

Recall the crowded way. Crowded platforms, parties and pubs, even stadia where we cheered and sang with the crowds, maybe bet your team would win. We felt united, connected, but how real was it?

Jesus declared as “salt of the earth” a people to whom you are drawn. His words about anger, unfaithfulness, and marriage have the ring of truth. He talked about an extra mile and even loving enemies. To him these things mattered. In religious devotion he decried hypocrisy and pretence and rated forgiveness highly. He said the love of money is a problem, but advised against the arrogance of condemning others.

In the Bible “The Way” is used as a description of Jesus’ followers more often than the term “Christian”. The first Christians were as defined by their lives as their beliefs! Perhaps like me you feel glad that there is a way opening. The boundaries of his vision create a path, narrow but sure.

### (b) two outcomes

You wonder, did Jesus get this from Psalms. That book opens with the same contrast of a fruitful tree with a shredded life blown about

**Y**ou cannot take the crowd with you into the Christian life: it inevitably involves a break. We can put this best, perhaps, by emphasising that it is something that is always intensely personal. Nothing, after all, is more difficult in this life than to realise that we are individual persons.

D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Sermon on the Mount*

**T**o follow Jesus implies that we enter into a way of life that is given character and shape and direction by the one who calls us. To follow Jesus means picking up rhythms and ways of doing things that are often unsaid but always derivative from Jesus, formed by the influence of Jesus. To follow Jesus means that we can’t separate what Jesus is saying from what Jesus is doing and the way that he is doing it. To follow Jesus is as much, or maybe even more, about feet as it is about ears and eyes.

Eugene Peterson, *The Jesus Way*

by the wind (Psalm 1). Jesus says one way leads to destruction - the word comes from a root meaning “to waste”. Ever heard of anybody getting “wasted”? Ever felt you saw a life rich in possibilities being wasted?

Jesus characterises one path by life (zoe); a word used throughout the New Testament to signify the fulness of life, the “life of the age to come”. Why settle for less?

### (c) two gates

There is a wide gate. It has always been there, crowded and popular. The connections to everyone else feel strong and provide reassurance. Is the crowd drawing you along? But how real are your connections? Have you sometimes felt alone in the crowd?

Small and unworthy as I feel Jesus calls “even me” to enter by his narrow gate, his turnstile. See DM Lloyd-Jones reference (*above*). Nobody else can take this step for us. “Will I step through.

In the ancient world the shepherd slept in the entrance to the sheepfold. With this in mind we notice that Jesus said “I am the gate for the sheep... I have come that they might find life in all its fullness” (John 10:7,10).