

# ONLINE SERVICE

Sunday 24 May 2020

Welcome and Notices

Amanda Fairs  
Viola

Call to Worship

Prayer of Invocation

Young at Heart

Bible Reading: Matthew 7:15-23  
Sonya Rutherford

Sermon

Beyond Covid: a fake news warning  
Matthew 7:15-23

Prayers of Intercession  
and  
The Lord's Prayer

Amanda Fairs  
Viola

Benediction



## NOTICES

24 May 2020

Wednesday 27 May 1.30 pm Covenanted Prayer Time  
Thursday 28 May 2 pm Session (an *actual* meeting)  
Sunday 31 May 11 am Sermon on the Mount Final.  
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 member: Marjorie HALL



and

**Rosie T** who ministers in the UK with Arab World  
Media as an outreach to the peoples of the Middle East.

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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BSB: 013-328. Account number: 2970 40694

## GARDENIA ST. PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH BLACKBURN

24 May 2020



The New York Times  
New York City Billboard Ad.

# WELCOME



Egypt's population of 84.5 Million live on the 3% of arable land along the Nile. The Coptic Church is the largest Christian church in the Middle East, nevertheless the population is 86% Muslim

The Coptic Church is a strategic key for the evangelisation of the region. Pray for Church leaders, especially the Coptic Pope. Wisdom, grace and confidence are needed in handling the Muslim authorities, Islamist persecution and the questioning world.

Pray also for the renewal movement in the Coptic Church, which has steadily gained momentum since 1930. It strongly emphasises Bible study and personal faith, and many are fervent witnesses for the Lord Jesus. Monasticism sees a rejuvenation as well. Pray for the growth and effectiveness of this movement of the Spirit.

#### Operation World

Islam is seen as the central pillar of society and Christians are viewed as second-class citizens. Although conversion is not forbidden by law, it is heavily opposed in practice.

Those who leave Islam for Christianity may lose custody of their children or be imprisoned for sharing their faith. Conversion is seen as shameful to a family's honour and can lead to threats, beatings and banishment.

Christians are monitored by local communities and attacked for professing their faith. Mob attacks often go unpunished by local authorities, leaving Christians even more vulnerable. Extremist Islamic preachers fuel a climate of intolerance and hostility.

#### World Watch Monitor

## Beyond Covid: a fake news warning.

Sermon  
Notes

I sometimes see an ABC TV program called Media Watch. The presenter, Paul Barry, analyses key media reports. Again and again he uncovers misleading and poorly researched stories amplified by repetition.

From the start our government by National Cabinet deferred to medical and scientific information about the COVID 19 crisis laying aside ideological politico-economic concerns. Fake news was minimised. The result has been massively fewer coronavirus deaths.

But fake news still proliferates. Jesus is clear that his 'way' will be misrepresented. We need to hear his warning.

### 1. EXPECT (fake news)

False prophecy is now termed "fake news", and it is no longer the sole domain of major news media. In an age of social media it is all too easy to transmit 'misinformation' (aka error!)

Israel was repeatedly warned about "false prophets" and had two searching questions. Did their message fit with Moses? and did their message come true? Like false prophets, false apostles in the New Testament usually offered easier, feel good options.

There is nothing new here. The broad way has its spruikers! The narrow gate is harder to find.

### 2. REALITY (exists)

It (almost) goes without saying that if there is a falsehood, then there is truth. In a crisis the truth matters more than ever. We need reliable information. Which voices know the situation and carry authority? Who can we trust?

Jesus has set before his hearers truth that 'fits' with Moses. He was crucified as King of the Jews (Matthew 27:37). Matthew presents him as the long awaited Messiah (Christ), the Son of God. He claims to be 'the truth' (John 14:7).

Does it matter?

The first kind of 'fruit' by which false prophets reveal their true identity is in the realm of character and conduct. In Jesus' own allegory of the vine fruitfulness evidently means Christlikeness, in fact what Paul later termed *the fruit of the Spirit*... A second 'fruit' is the person's actual teaching. This is strongly suggested by the other use Jesus made of the same fruit-tree metaphor (Matthew 12:33ff)... So then, if a person's heart is revealed in his words, as a tree is known by its fruit, we have a responsibility to test a teacher by his teaching.

John Stott, *The Sermon on the Mount*

### 3. DANGER (twofold)

Jesus' words are a warning. There is danger. Like wolves among a flock of sheep, or trees with diseased fruit, there will be mayhem.

Not healing, but a destructive legacy of sorrow and loss.

The damage is moral and doctrinal. From Jesus' sermon in particular, but also from the whole Bible in general we notice two related areas; see John Stott (above).

### 4. JUDGEMENT (at last!)

The burden of bringing God's errant creation back to health and wholeness belongs to God. He has acted to do this through Jesus, his beloved Son.

At the last, Jesus will restore all things. This is what his Judgement will bring about. We are invited to think deeply about this, especially in Matthew 25. We are even invited by Jesus to participate in this restoration.

If we opt out we become non-participants, not wanting God in our lives. To such persons God will say "Thy will be done".

Participants say "Thy will be done". He has outlined their prayer "Thy kingdom come on earth as in heaven"! Even with the apostle John: *Come Lord Jesus* (Revelation 22:20).