

# ONLINE SERVICE

during COVID-19

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15 November 2020

Welcome and Notices

Amanda Fairs  
viola

Call to Worship

Prayer of Invocation

Young at Heart  
Christine Bradbeer

Bible Reading: Romans 8:28-39  
Jakob Bradbeer

Great Texts of the Bible #15  
*More than Conquerors*

Prayers of Intercession  
and

The Lord's Prayer

Benediction



# NOTICES

15 November 2020

Wednesday 18 November 1.30 pm Sweet Hour of Prayer  
Sunday 22 November 11 am Great Texts of the Bible #16.

For your prayers this week:

Congregational member: Loris BALDERSTON



and



Matt & Kate VINCOMBE are  
with CMS working with an Indigenous Church  
at Groote Eylandt, NT.

Members who wish to continue their freewill offerings during the COVID 19 restrictions may post to our Treasurer. Vic Ansell, 59 Queen St Kangaroo Flat, Vic 3555 or use the electronic banking details below.



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

BLACKBURN  
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH  
53 Gardenia Street,  
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Treasurer: Mr Vic Ansell 5447 7118

## GARDENIA ST. PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH BLACKBURN

15 November 2020



**“In all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us”**

Romans 8:37

# WELCOME



Turkmenistan is one of the most authoritarian regimes in the world. Human rights violations are routine and severe, the right to freedom of expression is severely restricted and all media are controlled by the state. Torture and other ill-treatment is reported to be widespread, and prisoners are held in conditions amounting to inhuman and degrading treatment, and in many cases subjected to enforced disappearances. Deaths in custody are commonplace and uninvestigated. Believers who follow unauthorised religions and critics of the regime risk being imprisoned on fabricated charges. Women face discrimination, and same-sex sexual relations between men remains a criminal offence.

Amnesty International 2019

During the days of the Soviet Union, atheism was enforced by the state. Laws forbid private worship and ban all religious activity by unregistered organisations. Believers are constantly monitored and are subject to police raids that can lead to fines or imprisonment. Christian materials are often confiscated. No religious activities are allowed, except those controlled or organised by the state. Protestants are branded as "extremists" by their communities. Christians are thought to be political spies who must be controlled or even eradicated.

Those who leave Islam to follow Jesus often experience extreme persecution from their family and communities; believers are known to be locked up by their families for long periods and severely beaten. Local mullahs (Islamic leaders) often preach against converts, adding immense pressure..

Open Doors, Australia, 2020

## Great Texts of the Bible #15 Romans 8

Sermon  
Notes

Wesley's lengthy *Journal* entry for May 24, 1738 includes these words: "In the evening, I went very unwillingly to a Society in Aldersgate-Street, where one was reading Luther's preface to the Epistle to the Romans. About a quarter before nine, while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ; Christ alone, for salvation; and an assurance was given me, that he had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death."

If Martin Luther's preface to the Letter to the Romans can effect such a change, what might this magnificent letter itself work in our hearts?

With some trepidation today we come to one of the great peaks of the Bible, God's Golden Chain.

**1 Whom he foreknew** This is not about God merely knowing something in advance. In Hebrew 'knowing' has an intimate sense. "Adam" we read, "*knew* Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore a son".

"When God takes knowledge of people in this special way, He sets His choice upon them". (FF Bruce) Bruce then refers to Amos 3:2 and Hosea 13:5 along with 1 Corinthians 8:3 and Galatians 4:9 to illustrate the point.

In Romans 3 Paul has makes the point that all human beings, Jews as well as Gentiles, are 'dead' in trespasses and sins. We are not pursuing God nor godliness.

Any response to the overtures of God's love are here traced to God setting his love on a people, to make them his own.

**2 Predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son** The intention of God's foreknowing was the creation of women and men conformed to the image of Christ. It is a new creation - a new humanity in the likeness of God. Compare Genesis 1:26.

The old creation cannot bring forth this kind of harvest, it requires redemption. Only Jesus could pay the cost of our redemption.

By His resurrection Jesus has become the 'first-fruits', the 'first-born' from the dead'. Colossians 1:15-18. Jesus is the prototype of God's new humanity.

**3 These he also called** When God's message comes to us we the experience is from our perspective.

Perhaps it was it by the teaching of our parents, or a Sunday school teacher? John Dickson attributes his awakening to a SRE teachers at his Sydney school. A grandmother, The quiet testimony of a grandmother or the excited words of a friend?

Whatever the agency used by the Lord to bring his word to our attention, the primary agency is the work of the Holy Spirit . The distinction between those who awaken to the God's and those who do not has everything to do with the Spirit of God.

These things are set in God's eternal counsel.

**3 Whom he called, he justified** Awakening to the call of God usually begins with a sense of our own sin and need. "Woe is me" we say with Isaiah. "What can we do?" we ask with Peter's hearers on the day of Pentecost?

The answer is the we can do nothing but trust the provision God has made. Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. He has atoned for sin. As the graffiti writer put it: "Jesus carried the can for humanity".

God is able to justify the ungodly by hiding them in Jesus. The transaction is that their sin is deemed to Christ and his righteousness is accounted to them.

God's call and justification of the unrighteous comes as part of their lived experience.

**3 These He also glorified** This final segment of the golden chain is described with all the certainty of of an event already completed. This is another Hebrew idiom (seen also in Jude 14). For the believer the glory is yet to come. But it is certain.

On this basis we have confidence in the astonishing triumphs of verses 28, and 37. Verse 32 is the key to understanding our faith. Wesley's *Journal* entry closes

"And herein I found the difference between this and my former state chiefly consisted. I was striving, yea, fighting with all my might under the law, as well as under grace. But then I was sometimes, if not often, conquered; now, I was always conqueror."