

ORDER OF SERVICE

Sunday 10 July 2022

Doxology 709
Praise God

Prayer of Invocation

Hymn 261
Christ whose glory fills the skies

Young at Heart

Welcome and Notices
Mr Keith Ferres, Session Clerk

Offering and Dedication

Psalm 80:14-18
O God of Hosts, we Thee beseech
[a 1650 version of Hymn 299 Rejoice]

Reading: John 14:27-15:17
Loris Balderson

Sermon
From an Upper Room #5
The Vine.

Prayer of Intercession
and
The Lord's Prayer

Hymn 512
Take my life

Benediction



NOTICES

10 JULY 2022

Wednesday 13 July
Sunday 17 July

1.30 pm Prayer Meeting
11 am Divine Worship.
The Upper Room #6: The Vine and
the branches. All Welcome

For your prayers this week

Congregational members:
Geza and Sidonia KOSA

and



Motor and Julia YAT in Ethiopia: give
thanks for the safe arrival of baby Mark
and pray that the family will get the
needed permissions to return to Australia
later this year.



GARDENIA ST
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GARDENIA ST. PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH BLACKBURN

10 July 2022



WELCOME

The Vine

The Father and Son have been working in the world. Now it's the disciples turn, and 'greater things' are expected! To fulfil their mission the Father and Son have a parting gift to help the disciples: the Holy Spirit. The metaphor Jesus uses will help us explore the main ideas:

1. the soil (14:30)

For all creation's natural beauty and wonder, the world is a place where God is not honoured. John uses the word 'world' to describe a broken and troubled place, beloved by God, but in rebellion against him.

Jesus speaks of the 'prince of this world' coming. He means the agents of the High Priest and the Roman authorities, but behind them there is a deeper malevolent presence.

Does this mean that Christians are more at risk of conspiracy theories or paranoia than others? How do we avoid such distortions?

2. the vine (15:1)

In the 'promised land' the literal vineyard became a metaphor of hope. In the soil of this rebellious earth God planted a vine. (Isaiah 5). But it struggled to survive (Psalm 80).

The metaphor recurs in the teaching of Jesus (Matthew 21, Mark 12, Luke 20). The owner of the vineyard sent servants to the tenants, but they were rejected and abused. Eventually he sent his son. But they killed the son.

Abandoning the metaphor Jesus now declares 'I am the true vine'. Early Christian missionaries to South America used the beautiful flower of the native and abundant passionfruit vine to



Sermon Notes

explain the Passion (suffering) of Jesus. Its three stigma representing the three nails that held Jesus to the cross. The five anthers: the five wounds of Jesus (hands, feet and side) and the filaments representing the crown of thorns.

Jesus is about to display the greatest love a person can give. He will 'give his life for them!' (15:13, compare John 3:16)

3. the gardener (14:1b)

The Father is the 'owner' of the vineyard. It is his because he planned it, built it, planted and tended it. (Isaiah 5) It is a metaphor to explain his loving purpose to eradicate sin and suffering and bring redemption and blessing to the lives of his human family. (cf Isaiah 5:7). His purpose is both just, and loving.

4.the branches (15:5)

Connected to Jesus 'the vine', the disciples, his 'friends', are 'the branches'. They are learning to share his life. His Father has become their Father (John 20:17).

They may experience the pain of being pruned - 'cut back', but not 'cut off'. This is because as he lovingly tends the vine the Father will enhance its fruit bearing capacity by pruning. He seeks 'much fruit' (John 15:16). How about us?

5. the fruit (15:1)

What 'fruit' should we expect today?

God, the owner expects the words of Jesus to shape the lives of men and women (15:7); the fruit of the Spirit in human lives (15:26); and likeness to Jesus in all who claim to be his children, of whom it can be said 'God himself was their Father'. (1:13)



Turkmenistan's human rights record remained abysmal. Critics of the government were subjected to arbitrary detention and conviction under politically motivated criminal charges. Freedom of expression was severely limited as was freedom of religion. Consensual sex between men remained a criminal offence. Forced labour during the cotton harvest continued. The fate and whereabouts of at least 120 prisoners subjected to enforced disappearance remained unknown. Amnesty International 21/22

Persecution against Christians in Turkmenistan comes from both the government and the Islamic community. There are many restrictions on church life. Unless a church is registered, Christians are at risk of police raids, threats, arrests, and fines. However, even Russian Orthodox and Armenian Apostolic churches—who are registered—may have their Sunday services monitored. The government also restricts the printing or importing of Christian materials in Turkmenistan.

Church leaders are most vulnerable to persecution. Members of the Muslim community consider them responsible for leading people away from Islam, treating them with hostility and sometimes violence. Christians who have come from a Muslim background experience intense pressure from their families, friends, and villages. While government oppression is prevalent right across the country, these Muslim background believers in rural areas experience greater persecution. Open Doors 2022