

ORDER OF SERVICE

Sunday 17 July 2022

Doxology 709
Praise God

Prayer of Invocation

Hymn 207
Christ is made the sure foundation

Young at Heart
Open Doors

Welcome and Notices
Mr Keith Ferres, Session Clerk

Offering and Dedication

Hymn 230
Before Jehovah's awful throne

Reading: John 15:18-27
Ian Rutherford

Sermon
From an Upper Room #6
God so loved the World

Prayer of Intercession
and
The Lord's Prayer

Hymn 388
Jesus shall reign

Benediction



NOTICES

17 JULY 2022

Wednesday 20 July
Sunday 24 July

1.30 pm Prayer Meeting
11 am Divine Worship. All
Welcome. The Upper Room #7:
The Friend Will Come.

For your prayers this week

Congregational members:
Geza and Tibor KOSA and family,
Julia, Audrey and Tristan.



and

Andrew ADAMS from the Canterbury
Church will return to Japan this month.
There is a farewell luncheon at the
Canterbury Church on 23 July 12.30-3



GARDENIA ST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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God so loved the World

John uses the word 'world' 78 times; more than any other NT writer. His use of *kosmos* has to be carefully understood in context.

1. the challenge (of a hostile environment)

An environment hostile to human life can bring out the best in people. Think of the ingenuity and cooperation needed to work underwater or on the International Space Station. Or, on *terra firma*, in the hot or cold deserts of the earth. The Bible praises and encourages this kind of cooperation.

However, in his frequent use of the term *cosmos* (world) John isn't referring to a geographic zone, or the planet per se. He is directing us to a hostile human environment.

In the first instance, this is not the Empire's Greco-Roman culture. It is the elites who drew power and prestige from their positions in Judaism. Increasingly threatened, they conspired against Jesus 'without cause'. They wanted him dead.

2. the Champion (in a hostile environment)

This was not an unexpected end (12:27, 13:1). Jesus was aware that his death was imminent and what we have been hearing in this upper room adds weight to this. It is his farewell discourse.

He said he was hated without reason. What kind of world would reject Jesus?

'This was the world that looked at Jesus, at what he was doing, that listened to what he was saying, and that said 'No, thank you'. This was the world that saw the blind man healed and remained blind itself. This was the world

Sermon
Notes



Greek Christians in 1922, fleeing their homes from Kharpout to Trebizond. In the 1910s and 1920s the Armenian, Greek, and Assyrian genocides were perpetrated by the Ottoman Empire. source: Wikipedia

that saw Lazarus raised to life, and decided it would be safer to kill him off properly because otherwise people might believe in Jesus.

So who was being paranoid?

Was it Jesus?' (NTW)

3. the cross (within a hostile environment)

According to Cicero, in the Roman empire there was no more cruel or degrading execution than crucifixion. It was emblematic of being 'god-forsaken'.

To demonstrate the love of God in a world that rejected God, was to court rejection. Jesus knew this. Yet without his loving self-giving there would be no hope, no knowledge of God, no salvation.

The disciples were confused about Jesus departure, but he was clear that as his followers they too will experience rejection. 'Servant don't get better treatment'!

Only with the passage of time does this become clear to them. Jesus' way is a way of self-denial! All disciples must 'take up their cross' if

they are to follow Jesus' (Matt 16:24, Mk 8:34).

The story of Stephen and Saul (Acts 8:1) highlights this narrative.

4. the cross (in today's hostile environment)

Christians are not the only people who experience persecution, but they attract 80% of world religious persecution.

This month in London (July 5,6) the UK Government (FCDO) hosted a conference to enact measures to pursue freedom of religion and belief for all people.

Our country column (right) reminds us each week of the state of persecution of Christians today.

For your
Prayers



The rights to freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly remained tightly restricted. Major progress was reported in the eradication of forced labour in the cotton sector. Some safeguards against torture and other ill-treatment were introduced, although reports of such abuse continued. Over 2,000 people remained imprisoned for their peaceful religious beliefs. Violence against women remained widespread. Consensual sexual relations between men remained a criminal offence.

Amnesty International 21/22

The population of 33M is about 1 % Christian. Though all Christians experience some level of persecution in Uzbekistan, Protestants are often the victims of the greatest pressure. Christians who are a part of these non-registered churches may be viewed as "extremists," and the government believes church members are spies trying to destroy the government. Therefore, Christians and their churches may be monitored, and unregistered churches may be the victims of police raids, arrests and fines.

Uzbekistan is largely Muslim, so any Christian who converted from Islam faces increased pressure from their family and community. Christians in these situations may be locked up, beaten or expelled from their communities. Many converts from Islam are forced to hide their faith.

Open Doors 2022