

ORDER OF SERVICE

Sunday 3 October 2021

Chit Chat
Welcome and Notices
Christine Bradbeer

Prayer of Invocation

Young @ Heart
Mahboba's Promise
Christine Bradbeer

Bible Reading: 1 Thessalonians 4:13-5:8
Amanda Fairs

Sermon
The Master is coming...
We're *alive* with him.

Meditation
Molto Sustainuto by Reger
Amanda Fairs (viola)

Prayer of Intercession
and
The Lord's Prayer

Benediction



NOTICES

3 October 2021
www.blackburnpc.org.au

Wednesday 6 October 1.30 pm Covenanted Prayer Time.
Sunday 10 October 11 am Divine Service. Online Only.
Live stream on Facebook, later with closed caption option on YouTube.

For Your Prayers



Congregational member: **Joan DUNCAN** at Kirkbrae in Kilsyth. Her husband Don died on September 3.



and
Ross MAXWELL works with Helimission and is currently at home after serving in Madagascar for several years.

GARDENIA ST
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53 Gardenia Street,
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GARDENIA ST. PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH BLACKBURN

3 October 2021



WELCOME



The judiciary disregarded fair trial guarantees and due process and continued to apply broadly defined anti-terrorism laws to punish acts protected under international human rights law. Some members of the judiciary and legal profession were subjected to sanctions for the legitimate exercise of their professional duties. The judicial harassment of individuals such as journalists, politicians, activists, social media users and human rights defenders for their real or perceived dissent continued.

Amnesty International 2021

In Turkish society, strong religious nationalism puts pressure on Christians, making it hard for them to proclaim the gospel. Though converting to Christianity is not illegal in Turkey, it is widely considered unacceptable. Christians often feel pressured to stay silent and hide their faith, especially if they have left Islam.

Authorities target foreign Christians and have deported foreign Christians who are married to Turkish citizens, even if their children also live in Turkey.

Those who convert from Islam face opposition from their family and communities. Some even suffer divorce or disinheritance. Many Christians do not openly share their faith. They face limited access to state employment and often find it difficult to work in the private sector. Religious affiliations are recorded on identity cards, posing a threat for believers.

Converts experience greater opposition in rural areas of Turkey. Some move to city areas to experience more freedom. Historical Christian groups like the Armenian and Assyrian churches also face a lot of pressure and hostility in the south-eastern region of Turkey.

Open Doors 2020

Sermon
Outline

The Master is Coming

Acts 1:11, 1 John 3:2, Colossians 3:14

1. Jesus, whom he raised (4:14 cf 1:10)

The message which Paul, Silas and Timothy brought to Thessalonica caused a stir. It was an overtly Jewish message about someone raised from the dead, and it invited, research, discussion and reflection about the Messiah of the Jewish Scriptures.

A great many believed the Message. Mostly Gentiles it seems, including a large number of the leading women. Others were angry. They stirred up a mob and the apostles had to move on. The route was via Berea and Athens to Corinth.

2. Stop all the clocks (4:13)

Writing from Corinth Paul responds to one of the concerns that had reached him. Some believers have died, and the Messiah has not returned. As the risen and ascended Lord it was expected that he would return. The Greek word *parousia* means 'presence'. Why had the risen Lord not 'appeared'?

They are filled with questions. How can they face Jesus' appearing without their loved ones? Will their loved ones miss the resurrection? How does their new faith affect their grief? How are we to think when those we love die?

St Paul writes to restore their hope. He explains why their future is secure.

3. Not disadvantaged (4:15)

The dead are already with the Lord. When Messiah returns, they will accompany him. Then we who remain (Paul still imagining himself among them) will ascend to welcome the returning Messiah and accompany him with the returning departed to a new world.

Believers need not grieve as those who have no hope. The world as we know it has a terminus. Jesus was clear about this; through his Messiah, God reigns.

4. Not in the diary (5:2)

It will be unexpected. Although it seems Paul expected the Lord's return within his lifetime, it would be sudden and unexpected. There are Scriptural references from the Gospels and Epistles to Revelation. They call for careful exploration and yet take us to the limits of the imagination.

Some imaginations have been overactive and highly speculative. But the *parousia* is not mentioned as a topic for speculation, but for its pastoral impact.

Our Messiah is risen. We too shall rise. Even our grief is full of hope!

5. Encourage and build (5:11, cf 3: 12,13)

The beautiful outcome (as in Acts 1:11) is worship. Worship changes us. Paul prays for the believers in Thessaloniki. Notice his prayer (3:12,13).

And may the Master pour on the love so it fills your lives and splashes over on everyone around you, just as it does from us to you. May you be infused with strength and purity, filled with confidence in the presence of God our Father when our Master Jesus arrives with all his followers. (MSG)

Want to see a better world? What plans do you have? Imagine how this response to Jesus' appearing will transform a community!

WHEN HE RETURNS

The iron hand, it ain't no match for the iron rod
The strongest wall will crumble and fall to the mighty God
For all those who have eyes and all those who have ears
It is only he who can reduce me to tears
Don't you cry and don't you die and don't you burn
Like a thief in the night, he'll replace wrong with right
When he returns

Truth is an arrow and the gate is narrow that it passes through

He unleashed his power at an unknown hour that no one knew

How long can I listen to the lies of prejudice

How long can I stay drunk on fear out in the wilderness

Can I cast it aside, all this loyalty and this pride

Will I ever learn that there'll be no peace, that the war won't cease

Until he returns

Surrender your crown on this blood stained ground, take off your mask

He sees your deeds, he knows your needs even before you ask

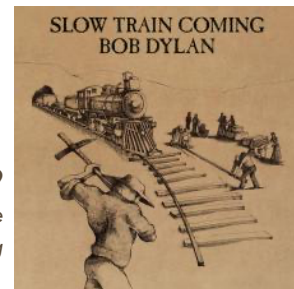
How long can you falsify and deny what is real

How long can you hate yourself for the weakness you conceal

Of every earthly plan that be known to man, he is unconcerned

He's got plans of his own to set up his throne

When he returns.



Bob Dylan, 1979

Nobel Laureate
from *Slow Train Coming*