

ORDER OF SERVICE

Sunday 21 March 2021

Welcome and Notices
Mr Keith Ferres, Session Clerk

Hymn 15
Let all the world, in every corner, sing!

Prayer of Invocation

Young at Heart
Christine Bradbeer

Bible Reading: John 12:27-43
Elise Rutherford

Hymn 693
Man of Sorrows, what a name

Sermon
Isaiah's 4th Servant Song
#2 Who has believed?

Prayer of Intercession
and
The Lord's Prayer

Hymn 410
I heard the voice of Jesus

Benediction

NOTICES

21 March 2021

Website: www.blackburnpc.org.au

Wednesday 24 March 1.30 pm Prayer Meeting.
Sunday 28 March 11 am Divine Service. All Welcome
Isaiah 53 #3 - He carried our sorrows
Covid safe practices.
Friday 2 April 9.30 am Good Friday Service, with
coffee and hot cross buns afterwards.

For your prayers this week:

Congregational member: **Alison Kidman**.
Alison lives at Bass Care in Canterbury.



and

Ross Maxwell flies with Helimission in
Madagascar. He recently arrived back in
Australia and has just completed quarantine.



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GARDENIA ST.
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
BLACKBURN

21 March 2021

Mallee Root
from the dry ground of the
Mallee, Victoria



For Your Prayers

Freedom of religion and belief was systematically violated in law and practice. The authorities continued to impose on people of all faiths and atheists codes of public conduct rooted in a strict interpretation of Shi'a Islam. Only Shi'a Muslims were allowed to hold key political positions. The right to change or renounce religious beliefs continued to be violated... Dozens of Christians, including converts, were subjected to harassment, arbitrary detention and prison sentences for practising their faith. Raids on house churches continued.

Amnesty International

The Iranian government sees Christianity as a Western threat against the Islamic way of life. Secret churches are often raided. Their leaders and church members can be arrested and given long prison sentences for "crimes against national security". Those who convert to Christianity from stricter Muslim families also face intense persecution at home.

Christians from Armenian and Assyrian communities are protected by the state, but still treated as second-class citizens. They are not allowed to tell others about Jesus or speak in the local language during church services.

Open Doors

Isaiah's 4th Servant Song #2:
Chapter 53 verses 1-3
WHO has BELIEVED?

Sermon Notes

Intro: Israel in Babylon

Israel had failed to communicate the love and mercy of God to the nations. Now the nation in exile because of idolatry and greed. But all is not lost. Isaiah presents a glorious future to a shattered nation .

He sees a person who will communicate God's saving power to the nations. Yahweh will bring His salvation. In four hauntingly beautiful *Servant Songs* we are introduced to the Servant of Yahweh.

[They are Isaiah 42:1-4; 49:1-6; 50:4-7; and 52:13-53:12.]

Through until Easter, we explore the final of *The Servant Songs*, and today we ask with the prophet "Who would have thought God's saving power would look like this?"

1. The shocking news report.

We noticed in the opening stanza of the song that the Servant would bring surprises. Although he would be successful and highly honoured, he would experience shocking abuse and disfigurement. In the end an astonished world would be amazed and speechless. Now we are taken deeper.

It is not going to seem like God at work at all. It will seem just the opposite. It sounds like a report from the Third World or a war and famine ravaged nation. Something from Syria, or Yemen, or Nigeria.

The Servant will grow up without privilege. "a scrawny seedling, a scrubby plant in a parched field". No hint here of a king's palace, richly spread tables or old money. What would he depict on his social media if not a luxury home, fine food and wealth?

And wasn't it a long way down...

2. Not among the glitterati.

"We (says the prophet, speaking as one of the people), we didn't notice him". He didn't make it to centre stage. Nothing to make us take a second look.

An invisibility cloak is one of Harry Potter's magical possessions. I think we can all relate to the times when just disappearing from view would be a great advantage. But what if you couldn't come back into view? What if people just didn't see you; treated you as if you were not there?



Jarrah Flame Burl
on Mallee Root.
\$3,950.00

We have no physical image of Jesus, but I googled his name and got 330,000,000 results in 0.69 seconds. His is the most painted face in history.

How hurtful to be unnoticed. Perhaps you know that feeling. The Servant of the LORD came, unattractive and without dignity or beauty.

3. A Man of Sorrows.

"Laugh and the world laughs with you/Weep and you weep alone" wrote Ella Wilcox after encountering a young woman on the way to a funeral when she was on the way to a party. The truth of this has been evident in its wide acceptance.

As a result there have been efforts in film to depict a smiling and laughing Jesus. And Jesus did celebrate and rejoice with feasting. However, the dominant image in the Gospels is of a Jesus who seriously engaged with people in pain.

If you and I can feel sadness like a physical weight on the chest, if we feel the grief of others in up close stories of grief and trauma or wide ranging news reports of war, famine and loss, perhaps we can intuit what God's Servant might have felt in a world so broken.

But the Servant not only saw it, *he endured it.* (v.3) And we turned away.

4. Who would have thought... ?

"Who would have thought God's saving power would look like this?" asks the prophet, as if astonished at his own vision.

Can God turn a twisted Mallee root into an item burnished and beautiful? Can you see where Isaiah's vision is taking us? Can you start to see the identify of the Servant crystallising in the Man of Sorrows we know as Jesus. Can you believe the report?