



**Sunday 3 May 2020**  
**Where Faith and Life Intersect: We Have Something to Say**  
**Isaiah 65:17-25**

**A little intro and some tips**

Our hope is that this is a resource that will help us all to engage meaningfully with God's word for us and invite an open and experimental sense of worship today. I encourage you to use this guide in a way that feels comfortable and most helpful and here are a couple of suggestions that might help the process.

*Get prepared for worship*

This week have a candle ready to light, if you are able.

Have your Bible close by, perhaps set up some favourite music to listen to, find some food and drink to have during communion. It doesn't have to be bread and grape juice, it could be whatever is available (tea and a biscuit) to use in this symbolic time.

*Get into a 'sacred' space*

It's important, when we are not physically in a dedicated worship space (like a church building), to mentally and spiritually shift into a sense of worship. Be intentional. Some examples of how you might prepare:

- Sit somewhere where you feel receptive and responsive to God (e.g. a cosy chair or outside in the garden);
- Have some visual representation of God (perhaps a small cross, your Bible, a symbol or image);
- Start with a few moments of silence and deep breathing.

*Consider your environment*

Consider your environment and what will work for you. If you have others in your house (house-mates/family), consider sharing this time with them, each reading or participating as appropriate. Or you might simply reflect individually, in your own time and space.

**Song: Blessed Be Your Name**

Blessed be Your name  
In the land that is plentiful  
Where Your streams of abundance flow  
Blessed be Your name

Blessed be Your name  
When I'm found in the desert place  
Though I walk through the wilderness  
Blessed be Your name

Ev'ry blessing You pour out I'll  
Turn back to praise  
When the darkness closes in Lord  
Still I will say

Blessed be the name of the Lord  
Blessed be Your name  
Blessed be the name of the Lord  
Blessed be Your glorious name

Blessed be Your name  
When the sun's shining down on me  
When the world's all as it should be  
Blessed be Your name

Blessed be Your name  
On the road marked with suffering  
Though there's pain in the offering  
Blessed be Your name

You give and take away  
You give and take away  
My heart will choose to say  
Lord blessed be Your name

Beth Redman | Matt Redman  
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**Bible Reading: Isaiah 65:17-25 (NIV)**

(If you are with others perhaps take turns to read different sections)

***New Heavens and a New Earth***

<sup>17</sup> “See, I will create

new heavens and a new earth.

The former things will not be remembered,

nor will they come to mind.

<sup>18</sup> But be glad and rejoice forever

in what I will create,

for I will create Jerusalem to be a delight

and its people a joy.

<sup>19</sup> I will rejoice over Jerusalem

and take delight in my people;

the sound of weeping and of crying

will be heard in it no more.

<sup>20</sup> “Never again will there be in it

an infant who lives but a few days,

or an old man who does not live out his years;

the one who dies at a hundred

will be thought a mere child;

the one who fails to reach a hundred

will be considered accursed.

<sup>21</sup> They will build houses and dwell in them;

they will plant vineyards and eat their fruit.

<sup>22</sup> No longer will they build houses and others live in them,

or plant and others eat.

For as the days of a tree,

so will be the days of my people;

my chosen ones will long enjoy

the work of their hands.

<sup>23</sup> They will not labor in vain,

nor will they bear children doomed to misfortune;

for they will be a people blessed by the Lord,

they and their descendants with them.

<sup>24</sup> Before they call I will answer;

while they are still speaking I will hear.

<sup>25</sup> The wolf and the lamb will feed together,

and the lion will eat straw like the ox,

and dust will be the serpent’s food.

They will neither harm nor destroy

on all my holy mountain,”

says the Lord.

## **Message: “Where Faith and Life Intersect: We Have Something to Say”**

Welcome to a new series today in the life of our community. For the month of May we will be focussing on what it might mean to find the intersections of our ancient and life-giving faith with our current living experiences.

### **Intersections**

It’s important to clarify what I mean by an intersection in this context. An intersection is where one path (faith) and another path (life) naturally come together and meet. In Luke 4:18 when Jesus stands up to speak in the synagogue he isn’t just making stuff up, he is highlighting the immediate and obvious places where people’s needs and issues crossed over with the good news and hope of the Kingdom. Jesus talks about people being healed and recovering their sight after years of blindness, he talks about people being released from oppressive captivity, he talks about resources for the poor and debts being forgiven. The connections are obvious and immediate. Unfortunately for us in our modern, globalised world we can often miss the intersections all around us – because they seem less obvious.

### **Isaiah 65:17-25**

This text speaks prophetically about the kind of living experience that God desires for his creation. A place where all things are made new and the old ways of complexity and pain are not even remembered. Where weeping, grieving will be no more. When this text was written it was to a people whose recent history was defined by the terror of the Babylonian invasion, the destruction of the Jerusalem temple, the forcible dislocation and abjection of Judean leaders. It starts with the promise of a new season and then gets really specific.

The text outlines some clear issues for the ancient community – and equally importantly as the prophet is speaking – the character of God becomes ever clearer. Isaiah 65 depicts a God who CARES about the issues that everyday people care about

Interestingly – these issues are as relevant today as when Isaiah wrote them down... despite a vastly different cultural context.

**Isaiah 65:20-23 says...**



“Never again will there be in it  
an infant who lives but a few days.”

### Coronavirus death toll at Newmarch House aged care facility jumps by four

Alex Chapman • 7NEWS • Tuesday, 28 April 2020 5:27 pm



Anglicare's Newmarch House aged care facility in Sydney's west. Credit: AAP

“...or an old man  
who does not live  
out his years; the one  
who dies at a  
hundred will be  
thought a mere  
child; the one who  
fails to reach a  
hundred will be  
considered  
accursed.”



“No longer will they build houses  
and others live in them...”

**Another housing crisis is coming –  
and bailouts and eviction freezes  
won't be enough to prevent many  
from losing their homes**

March 28, 2020 4:28am AEDT

### COVID-19 REMINDS US IT'S TIME FOR A NEW FASHION REVOLUTION

Cotton farmers, mill labourers, garment workers, fashion brands and retail workers are all being affected by the pandemic. Will this push fashion to change for the better?

“For as the days of  
a tree, so will be  
the days of my  
people; my  
chosen ones will  
long enjoy the  
work of their  
hands.  
They will not labor  
in vain”



Shane Claiborne (*The Irresistible Revolution*), offers his perspective on “intersections” of life and faith:

*“... rather than asking what God’s will is for my life, I find it helpful instead to ask what God’s will is and how my life might fit into that. Maybe that’s what it means to seek first the kingdom of God—the world does not revolve around us, but rather we are revolving around God. That relieves the pressure a bit because we know that God’s will is for the hungry to have food, the homeless to have housing, the oppressed to be set free, and we get to be a part of that. The question then becomes how we can contribute to the redemptive work God is doing. Instead of asking God to bless what we’re doing, we can align ourselves with what God has already promised to bless—the poor, the merciful, the peacemakers—and know with confidence that God is blessing us, or more important, that we are blessing God.”*

Despite the ancient nature of Christian faith. Despite the criticisms, the hostility, the indifference to our story of faith – we have a God who has always and continues to be, by very nature, passionately interested in the key issues facing people and society today. Often criticised as irrelevant, biased and ignorant Christian faith has something really hopeful to say in today’s world. We have a history, we have a beautiful and grand narrative whose central and enduring theme is around the life-giving and transformative task of restoring beauty to a frail and broken world. We have something to say – not defensively or quietly or dogmatically – but creatively, clearly, intelligently and respectfully.

**The Lion Inside** (Rachel Bright & Jim Field) – this is a story about being brave and finding our voice...  
You can watch and listen here: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GlfDD3qYZ\\_0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GlfDD3qYZ_0)

In a dry dusty place where  
the sand sparkled gold,  
Stood a might flat rock –  
all craggy and old.

And under the rock  
In a tinyful house  
Lived the littlest, quietest,  
meekest brown mouse

He was so very tiny,  
so incredibly small  
That nobody EVER noticed him  
EVER... at all.

He got trod on and sat on  
and missed out for stuff.  
Ignored and forgotten.  
Yes... mouse life was tough.

Meanwhile far above  
ON TOP of the rock  
Times were quite different  
It was LION o’clock.

The hug toothsome creature  
made sure EVERYONE saw  
How IMPORTANT he was  
by how loud he could...  
ROAR

Then, late one dark night, in his mini-mouse bed  
the cleverest thought popped into his head.  
He jumped from the covers and held up a paw.  
“I’ve got it!” he said./“What I need is a  
ROAR!”  
“... I mean, what if this mouse  
with the weeniest squeak  
Was a little more GRRRRRRR  
and a little less meek?

“Yes!” thought the mouse  
“I MUST find out how!  
I will learn how to roar and  
I WILL learn it NOW!

But – GULP – oh my gosh,  
there was only ONE beast  
who could teach him this thing  
BUT might make him ... a FEAST!

It was time to be strong,  
take a chance ... after all,  
Forever was such a long time  
to feel small.

So he made himself brave  
and he thought like a WINNER.  
He set off for the top ...  
hoping not to be dinner!

It felt like the scariest thing  
he could do...  
But if you want things to change  
You first have to change YOU.

The further he climbed,  
The closer he got  
To the slumbering lion  
reclining on top.

Then at last as he stood  
on his tippety toes,  
He found himself

suddenly nose to NOSE.

“Ahem, GULP, pardon me.  
Wake up, Mr Lion, you’ve got company!  
Um, SQUEAK, Mr Lion, what I’ve come to you for  
Is SQUEAK... do you think you could teach me your roar?”

A silence befell that twinkling plain.  
Lion opened his eyes and puffed out his mane...  
Time slowed right down – why it felt like a week.  
Then he opened his mouth ... and let out an... EEEEEEEK!  
The lion was shaking. His paws all a-fumble.  
He was backing away with a scrambling tumble.  
“Don’t hurt me,” he whimpered. “Oh! Try to be nice.”  
Well my goodness, this lion was frightened of mice!”

“Don’t worry,” Mouse peeped.  
“I’m a friend, not a foe.  
Let’s ROCK this together.  
We’ll have FUN don’t you know.”

That was a magical moment for sure...  
And mouse didn’t feel AT ALL small any more.  
He had found his true voice and learned to speak out,  
And for THAT you don’t need to roar or to shout.

And from that day and always, the two were a pair.  
They both liked that rock better, now that rock was to share.  
The mouse, while still little, felt BIUG in his head.  
And Lion? He still roared... but with laughter instead!

Yes, that day they BOTH learned  
that, no matter your size,  
We all have a mouse  
AND  
a lion inside. (The End) ☺

Do you know what I love about this story? We can’t let a whole lot of superficial things define us. We all have a roar inside – sometimes we think we shouldn’t let our brave roar out, perhaps it will think we don’t have the right to roar or the size or the history – but isn’t the mutuality of this story inspiring? The lion doesn’t try to make the mouse any different – and likewise the mouse doesn’t mock the big old lion. They hear each other’s voice and find a new sense of creation and community – one where everyone gets to be included and to be valued for what they say.

We have a big story of faith – that intersects powerfully with the everyday contexts of life in our world. Let’s be brave and explore how we are intentionally listening to God’s spirit and intentionally looking with God’s eyes to see the places where faith and life intersect today and not be afraid to speak into these places.



## Communion – (have some food and drink prepared for this time)

*If you're able, join us at 11am Sunday on Zoom to share in communion together at [rnqwd.com/communion](https://rnqwd.com/communion) or after you have shared in communion below, consider who you can call to have a chat as you would on a Sunday morning after a church service.*

***New this week:*** *alternatively, you can join in, and invite others, to watch through **Facebook Live** for the candle lighting and communion leading (you will just see the leader, not everyone else's faces or the morning tea chat) – **you don't need a Facebook account** or a camera/microphone. Visit [facebook.com/RingwoodChurchOfChrist](https://facebook.com/RingwoodChurchOfChrist) and look for the live video that will appear around 11:10am.*

We all have something to say, problem is, right at the moment, we don't have as many people to say it to ....

Do you find that the things you have to say will be different depending on the audience? What you say to your family might be different to what you say to your work or school colleagues. What you say to your partner might be different to what you say to your friends. What you are willing to say on social media might be different to what you'd say in person.

How fortunate are we, that we get to also communicate with the creator of this world? God always listens, God is always present, God has no expectations about the right words, he hears our hearts. At communion, we remember, but we also communicate.

Communion allows us the opportunity to bring to God the things that are on our hearts.

To seek forgiveness for the things that have come between us and God.

To thank God for the blessings he has given, sometimes they're huge and obvious, but even when we have to look hard to find the blessing we need to acknowledge we've noticed.

To ask God to be in places and situations where He is needed.

To listen and be open to what God wants from us.

Communion allows us to pause.

*Dear heavenly Father, you know our hearts, you know our thoughts before we put them into words. We ask for your forgiveness for the things we have said and not said, the things we've done and missed doing, that separate us from you, because we want to be close to you.*

*We thank you for your blessings, we look for them, we notice them and we're thankful, in amongst some pretty tough times we see glimpses of you to remind us that you're here in this with us, you have not abandoned us, you are supporting us throughout. And Lord, we celebrate with those who are celebrating, your joy is abundant.*

*There are places and situations where you are needed – for comfort, for guidance, for sustaining strength. You're already there Lord, and we acknowledge that and appreciate your constancy.*

*Speak to us, use us, show us how to share your light where we are.*

*We give this time of communion to you, and our ears and hearts are open to you.*

*Amen*

During the last supper, while they were eating, Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it saying, "Take, eat, this is my body". Then he took the cup gave thanks and offered it to them, and they all drank from it.

Let's share now in communion, eat and drink the symbols you have prepared, and give thanks.

## A Time for Grieving, Together

We've had a few heavy weeks as a church and as a broader community. These times are only made more difficult by the restrictions around seeing each other face to face, sharing time with friends and giving a hug. You're invited to light a candle around 11am on Sunday as an act of unity as we hold each other and pray together.

The words below are adapted from a poem by Sherry L Williams. Read through slowly, allowing yourself some silence between the lines, a chance to process, talk or pray. As you begin, bring to mind people and situations that are on your heart.

*We light these candles in memory of and in honour of ...  
These candles represent our grief, courage, memories, love, and our hope.*

*This candle represents our grief. The pain of losing someone or something is intense. It reminds us of the depth of our love for those that we used to spend so much time with and the things we were able to freely do.*

*This candle represents our courage – to confront our sorrow, to comfort each other, and to carry on in the things God calls us to.*

*This candle is in memory of those no longer with us – the times we laughed, the times we cried, the times we were angry with each other, the silly things we did, and the caring and joy given to us.*

*This candle is the light of love. We have a special place in our heart for those we love, and those that we are now missing. We give thanks for the gift of time together and the opportunities to show love.*

*This candle is the light of hope. It reminds us of love and memories that are ours forever. May the glow of the flame remind us of the faithfulness of God, our source of hopefulness now and forever.*

May God hold each of us near as we grieve, reflect, celebrate and love. May we hold each other as a community, finding ways to support and space to be together. And be sure to pick up the phone and speak with someone as you need to.

## **Song: Who You Say I Am**

Who am I that the highest King  
Would welcome me  
I was lost but He brought me in  
Oh His love for me  
Oh His love for me

Who the Son sets free  
Oh is free indeed  
I'm a child of God  
Yes I am

Free at last  
He has ransomed me  
His grace runs deep  
While I was a slave to sin  
Jesus died for me  
Yes He died for me

In my Father's house  
There's a place for me  
I'm a child of God  
Yes I am

I am chosen not forsaken  
I am who You say I am  
You are for me not against me  
I am who You say I am

Ben Fielding | Reuben Morgan  
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## **Prayer**

God of wisdom and courage, help us to be brave and find our voice. God remind us again today of the life-giving and transformative story of faith that we are a part of and encourage us to live more intentionally into that story.

Strengthen us this day with the virtues of faith, hope and love. Grant us your loving guidance.

Amen.