

# Howrah Sandford Weekly Church Bulletin

## 26<sup>th</sup> July 2020

**SUNDAY SERVICES** at St Thomas's Howrah 8.30 and 10 am (both Holy Communion) preacher Andrew Lake, and St Barnabas's South Arm 10 am (Morning Prayer) preacher Andrew Koerbin. There is also weekly online worship found on the home page of [www.stthomashowrah.com](http://www.stthomashowrah.com)

**SENTENCE OF SCRIPTURE:** The Apostle Paul wrote, "for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong." From 2 Corinthians 12

### **BIBLE READINGS:**

Genesis 32: 22-31

Psalms 61

2 Corinthians 12: 7-10

Luke 22: 39-46

### **SERMON: Prayers of the Bible 1: Prayers of struggle**

When we pray to God, whatever form that takes – in congregational worship, during a daily devotional, in the words of a favourite hymn or during a restless night we are seeking "the peace of God that passes all understanding". We naturally want prayer to be an experience of resting in God.

But in our times of personal crisis prayer is more like a wrestling with God. Look at the experience of Jacob, Jesus and Paul:

1. In the reading from Genesis 32 Jacob's personal crisis was the consequence of his past sins. Jacob had to confront Esau the twin brother he had grievously cheated many years before. Jacob was torn between fear of his brother who might exterminate his whole family and trust in God's promise of a blessed future for generations to come. Jacob wrestled with God all night and would not let go of him until God had blessed him. In the morning Esau arrived with his forces but to Jacob's surprise Esau did not attack him but instead embraced him! Jacob had some serious defects in his character but his saving grace was his tenacity in clinging to God in spite of his overwhelming fear.
2. The crises in our life don't necessarily come from making bad choices. Sometimes they come about from doing the right thing. In the reading from Luke 22 Jesus's crisis in the Garden of Gethsemane was the consequence of his obedience to his God-given mission. On the very brink of his betrayal Jesus was facing the prospect of intolerable suffering and prayed his heart out. God strengthened him for the last, excruciating hours of his life and then raised him from the dead and exalted him to Lord over all. "Not my will, but yours be done" is probably the greatest prayer in the Bible.
3. Have you ever had a major health crisis? In the reading from 2 Corinthians 12 Paul's crisis was a nameless chronic ailment he called "a thorn in the flesh, a messenger from Satan". He had pleaded at length with God to heal him. Instead of physical healing he got a message: "my grace is sufficient for you for my power is made perfect in weakness." Paul was taught a lesson that he shares with us: that in our weakness we can be blessed if it leads us to be more dependent on and closer to God.

God answered the anguished prayers of Jacob, Paul and Jesus in unexpected ways. After they prayed and God answered them Jacob was left with a painful limp, Paul still had his affliction and Jesus still had to face his trial and crucifixion, but they were blessed – how? The end result of their wrestling with God was indeed resting in God. But more than that, they were strengthened by God and brought to a new level of faith and personal maturity.

### **THE TAKE-AWAY**

In each case they hung on to God until they got an answer. So:

- Bring your pain to God
- Be honest about your struggle. Even argue with God. A number of the Psalms are arguments with God.

- When things fall apart hang on like grim death to God's promises and to your knowledge of his character

"All-wise and all-loving Father, in our time of struggle and pain teach us by your Spirit to cling to you alone, so that we may be blessed with a deeper experience of your goodness and strength, through Jesus Christ our Lord."

## **HOMEWORK**

Watch on ABC iview 'The Black Balloon.' It's not a religious film in any sense but a brilliant portrayal of struggle and acceptance on the pathway to personal maturity that echoes today's theme.

## **FOR YOUR PRAYERS:**

- Give thanks for the faithful service of wardens, parish councillors and treasurer. Pray for the right people to be nominated and elected with the prospect of working with the new minister to move our parish forward
- There are close to fifty thousand people in our parish area. Over the next few weeks we will be praying for our different communities. This week let's pray for the people of **Howrah and Tranmere** that God will open their hearts to him; for God's blessing on the school chaplaincy at Howrah Primary and on the clergy and people of the churches in Howrah: St Thomas' Anglican, Salvation Army and Reformed (aka Good News Church), Church of Christ and River City Church (meeting at C of C)

## **FROM THE MINISTER:**

- For your diary: **Parish Annual Meeting** Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> August at 11 am at St Thomas's preceded by one service only at 9.30 am and a cuppa. Easy lunch at 12: soup and sandwiches. Sign up over the next two weeks at church for the **parish electoral roll** and permission to have your contact details on **parish directory**. Nomination forms for wardens and parish councillors are available.

- **We are looking for a New Treasurer.** Consider serving in a key role for the ministry and mission of your church.

About the role:

Within the Parish currently the tasks that would traditionally be undertaken by the treasurer have been segregated and shared. At each centre we have parishioners who are rostered on to count the weekly offerings, and a nominated person who undertakes the banking of those funds. Housekeeping supplies are arranged by a member of the parish through petty cash.

There is currently support provided for the data entry which is managed through MYOB on a laptop so it is not restricted to a particular place or time.

The tasks the Treasurer does undertake are:

- Making payments of accounts (with additional signatory – currently the wardens)
- Monthly bank reconciliation and reports for presentation at Parish Council, (which if not a general member of parish council, the treasurer is only required to attend to present and can then leave again).
- Preparation of the annual reports for audit to be presented at the annual meeting
- Preparation of the draft annual budget for acceptance at parish council for presentation to the members at the annual meeting
- Manage any other financial aspects within the Parish, alongside the Minister, wardens or parish council, as they may arise

Ongoing assistance and full handover will be provided.

If you have any questions about the role, please speak to Kate Andrewartha on 0438 659 655 or if you are interested in taking on the role please speak to wardens Neil Beechey, Barry Davidson, Hilary Reader or me.

With the love of Jesus  
Andrew Lake  
0487903363