

24 May 2020

SBC

SCARBOROUGH BULLETIN

What is happening at Scarborough Baptist Church?

THIS WEEK

The joy of
my salvation

The theology of
prayer



Welcome

Welcome to another Zoom simulcast of our service this morning. Some of our musicians have gathered in church to lead our worship from there. We are hoping that this will enable us to get a clearer sound this way. You are again invited to join in worship by singing along with your microphones muted. Let us pray that we will have a life-changing encounter with the living God this morning.

Please also pray for Fay Day whose son, Michael, died recently. We are planning a short memorial service with her next week. If you would like to join, please let one of the pastors know.

(0418263602 - Andre; andre@pbc.wa.edu.au)

EVENTS THIS WEEK

Monday morning Bible study at 9.30am.
The link is in the **calendar** on the web page.

Thursday evening Bible study at 7pm.
The link for this is also on the **calendar** on the website.

Teenzone is on Wednesday at 3.30pm.
Members' Meeting: this will be next week after the service.

Brighton Kids: as usual this week.

Offering: Please consider arranging an EFT as we have no other means of doing our offering at present. Our bank details: Scarborough Baptist Church - BSB 306-054 Account number 4186613

Please pray for our eldership as they prayerfully consider our way forward and out of this lockdown.

LUKE 11:1 "Lord, teach us how to pray."

Prayer is not necessarily a Christian activity. It is obviously a religious activity. People from different religions all pray to their gods using a variety of means to communicate with him, her or them. People without any religion may also find themselves praying in certain circumstances. Christian prayer differs from all other prayers, because we call on the Christian God. To pray is of course, to address someone. Just as we cannot expect a letter to reach a particular person if we put the wrong name on the envelope, similarly we cannot expect God to respond to prayers which are not addressed to him.



To pray we need theology. Theology, not as some abstract theoretical knowledge about God, but theology in the sense of specific concrete knowledge about the person and character of the God we are addressing. It is, therefore, not strange, that when Jesus teaches his disciples to pray, that he starts by saying some things about the person of God.

Jesus opens his prayer by saying: "Our father *in heaven*". This expression means that God is beyond us, He is not an object like other things we can get to know.

God remains beyond our grasp. Heaven is God's domain and we cannot enter it. In heaven God is surrounded by angels. They are spiritual beings who were created to reside with God in the spiritual reality we call "heaven". Humans, however, do not belong in heaven. Our existence is grounded in a physical reality, called earth. We were created by God from the dust of the earth. While we are more than just physical bodies, we can never think of ourselves as existing without our physical bodies. When our bodies die, we die. We are radically different from God who is in heaven.

To pray to a God hidden in heaven can be a dangerous business. "God is in heaven, and you are on earth, so let your words be few," the "Speaker" - the skeptical onlooker - declares in Ecclesiastes 5:2. For the "Speaker", God's heavenly existence means that He is far removed from us. We should say as little as possible in case God notices us and demand things from us. Keep your head down, and stay out of God's way, is his advice.

And yet, the first two words should not be forgotten. Jesus starts the prayer by referring to "our Father, who is in heaven." "Our Father" is a relational term. It expresses an intimate loving relationship between God and those who pray. It says that we can know this "hidden-in-heaven" God; that we, earthly beings, are closer to God than the angels in heaven. It says that we are the children of this God. And so we may pray, in faith and expectation, knowing that heaven is closer than we might have thought.