

SCARBOROUGH BULLETIN

What is happening at Scarborough Baptist Church?

THIS WEEK

THE TRINITY

PRAYER AND THE COMING KINGDOM



Thank you for joining us this week. We value your participation in the service. The communion we share, though not physically, is nevertheless very real. We have this fellowship through the Holy Spirit who has invaded our lives to bind us to Christ and to each other.

We will restart our services in church next week at ten. We know that it may be difficult for some people to attend. We are hoping to do live-streaming of the service through Zoom.

We are grateful that the Lord has led many people to continue contributing financially to the church. The need to complete the coffee-bar to serve and reach the community remains urgent. To do so, when most of the church's investments have nose-dived will require a miracle. Please pray for this.

EVENTS THIS WEEK

Monday morning 9.30am Bible Study at the church

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

Teenzone is on Wednesday at 4.30pm.
Brighton Kids: as usual this week.

We are expecting to have both digital and physical services from 14 June, so people will have a choice as to whether they want to be at church or at home.

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

Jesus' call for his disciples to pray for the coming of God's Kingdom places prayer in the context of restlessness, upheaval, revolution. Those who pray this way acknowledges that the world is not good; that something has to happen to change it. It sets those who pray apart from those who simply accept things as they are. The way things are, they confess, does not reflect God's rule. Everything which happens is not under the complete control of God. There are many things which happen in the world which are in direct opposition to what God wants to happen.



To say that God does not control everything which happens in the world may sound like blasphemy to some. Calvin built much of his theology on the "sovereignty of God". According to Calvin, if we do not confess that God is in charge of everything, everywhere and all the time, we are denying the majesty and glory of God. John Piper, a popular American pastor/ theologian has propounded the same understanding of God's rule in recent times.

There is no doubt that many people find comfort in this view of God's rule. Despite all the tragic thing which come their way, they feel they can rest assured in the

knowledge that God has everything in hand. It may be an enigma why they have to go through these particular suffering, but they trust that one day they will understand. Some theologians have used the example of a piece of embroidery. If you look at the back, it seems a confusing mess. It is only when you turn it over that you see the beautiful picture. While we are experiencing the "back" of the Kingdom of God on earth, one day with the return of Jesus we will see the completed beautiful picture, they believe.

It is good that theological doctrines provide comfort to people facing the vicissitudes of life. We should, however, never allow pastoral considerations to overshadow the truth of the doctrine we confess. Strangely enough, the Reformed position has a lot in common with some extreme forms of Pentecostalism. Both of them operate from the premise that the Kingdom has already come, that God is already fully in control and directing everything which happens in the world. The Pentecostals believe that there should be no more suffering, poverty and need, that people can already, here and now, experience an abundant life because God's Kingdom has arrived in and through the death and resurrection of Jesus. The Reformed theologians, similarly, see God's powerful hand in and through the suffering and sickness in the here and now, because they believe that God's Kingdom has never gone away - God is and remain the sole ruler of his creation. In both cases, there is no need to pray for God's Kingdom to come. The Reformed theologians are fatalistic (God has determined everything which will happen) and the Pentecostals are more "faithalistic" (if you only believe you can experience the benefits of the Kingdom). Neither can, however, pray with Jesus: "May your Kingdom come!"

Those who pray with Jesus for God's rule to come, are not satisfied with this world, the church, or themselves. They pray for the Kingdom, because even though the Kingdom has come in Jesus, they realise that outside and apart from him the world remains broken - marked by sin, suffering and death. They await the final inauguration of the Kingdom at the return of Jesus when everything will be made new. Until that day, they pray: "May your Kingdom come!"