

SBC BULLETIN

SERMON: THE STORY OF ABRAM (3)



Welcome! We often start the bulletin this way. Playing around with the word renders some interesting thoughts? Does it mean, "all who are well, come!"? If we place a short pause between well and come, it may perhaps indicate being reluctantly persuaded to let someone join, as in "Well, (if you have to, must, then...) come. All this is, of course, just playful nonsense. If we trace the word's etymology we see that it comes "from the Old English wilcuma 'a person whose coming is pleasing', wilcumian (verb), from wil- 'desire, pleasure' + cuman 'come'. The first element was later changed to wel- 'well', influenced by Old French bien venu or Old Norse velkominn."

Even this search for the origin of the word does not help us much, as modern linguistics teaches us that words only have meaning in the context in which they are used. The welcome from a Mafia boss to a newly discovered undercover agent may indicate the exact opposite to the word's etymology. Today, here, the word means that we are grateful to see you, that we believe you will add to our meeting, that it is a pleasure to see you. But it takes on even more significance. It is spoken by God as he opens the door to his heart for us all this morning. Welcome!

HAPPENINGS THIS WEEK

SUNDAYS@6 - Back on again this evening

Monday morning Bible study at 9.30 at the church

Monday evening Home Group at 7 at the church

Tuesday morning Craft Group - All welcome

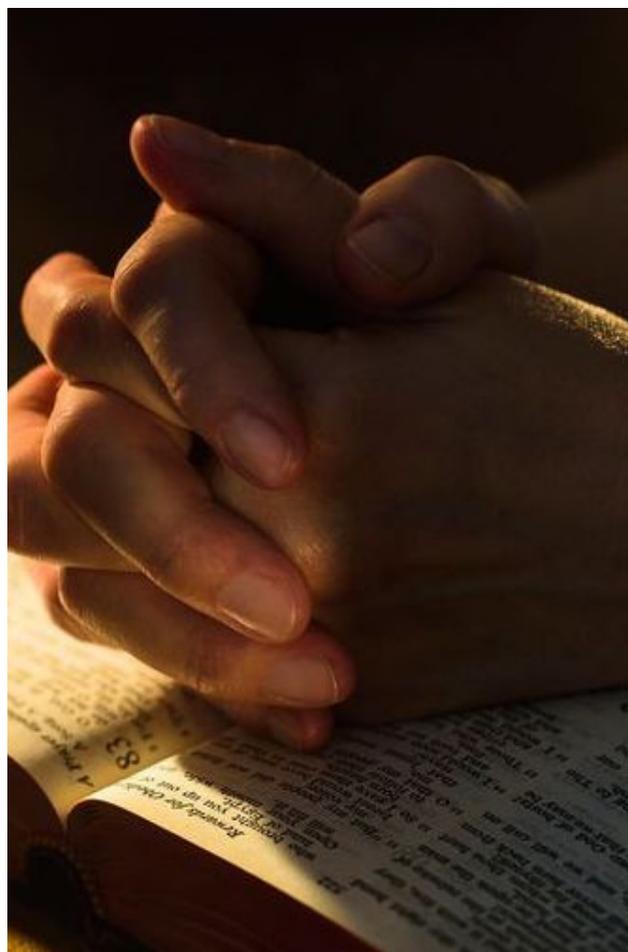
Thursday morning Mainly Music for littlies and their carers

Mentor Programme to start soon

If you interested in either church membership or would like to be baptised (or find out more about this) please speak to one of the pastors.

A Prayer List for you

1. Give thanks for His goodness is never-ending
2. Pray for our family members and friends who do not know Christ as Saviour.
3. Pray that we will be witnesses to his love in our daily lives.
4. Please keep Bob and Rosemary in your prayers.
5. Iris and Malcolm would also appreciate your prayers.
6. Sue Riding is still recovering after eye surgery. Pray for complete healing.
7. Pray for our mentor program in Scarborough Primary School.
8. Pray for our pastors and their family members.



Malcolm Guite is a poet, chaplain and author. He reflects here on one aspect of prayer - joy.

BLISS

Softness and peace and joy and love and bliss
 Love made this way, and lifts us up each stair,
 Our maker knows that we were made for this:
 The utter bliss that Heaven loves to share.
 We glimpse it sometimes in another's eyes,
 We taste it sometimes on the tongues of prayer.
 It takes us wholly, takes us by surprise,
 But grasping it, our arms clasp empty air.
 Our bliss has vanished with a word of promise,
 A sweet come-hither wave that offers more,
 Each ecstasy has been a farewell kiss
 That left us weeping on the hither shore.
 Yet every passing moment whispers this:
 Eternity shall love us into bliss.

Malcolm Guite himself has this to say about his poem:

It may seem odd to be contemplating Bliss amidst all the sorrow and fear that surrounds us in this present crisis, but this is precisely the time when we need to lift our eyes to the Heavens and contemplate that full and final bliss for which we are made. Herbert knew this well, and of course his generation had to deal with several severe plague seasons, withdrawing from the fullness of their usual lives and sequestering themselves away, but such a time of crisis is just when faith deepens and just where the poetry comes from! Guite continues: Like joy, bliss is almost impossible to write about, to put into words, it is beautiful, fleeting, not to be seized or grasped, or even sought, but only received as a sudden gift. In my poem (Guite's words) I tried to evoke my own experience through particular glimpses and moments and to be true both to its brevity and promise. For even the smallest moment of bliss seems to promise something more. As I came to compose the poem I found myself remembering one of Milton's rare uses of the beautiful word in his "Ode on Time", lines he wrote to be engraved on a clock. The poem begins 'Fly envious Time till thou run out thy race' but the lines that went to my heart, and which I was remembering when I wrote this poem were: "Then long Eternity shall greet our bliss With an individual kiss; /And Joy shall overtake us as a flood."

Guite again: I loved that juxtaposition of the eternal and the personal, the infinite and the intimate, and I hope something of that comes across in my poem too.

GENESIS 13: 1-13**CEV TRANSLATION**

13 Abram and Sarai took everything they owned and went to the Southern Desert. Lot went with them. 2 Abram was very rich. He owned many cattle, sheep, and goats, and had a lot of silver and gold. 3 Abram moved from place to place in the Southern Desert. And finally, he went north and set up his tents between Bethel and Ai, 4 where he had earlier camped and built an altar. There he worshiped the Lord. 5 Lot, who was traveling with him, also had sheep, goats, and cattle, as well as his own family and slaves. 6-7 At this time the Canaanites and the Perizzites were living in the same area, and so there wasn't enough pastureland left for Abram and Lot with all of their animals. Besides this, the men who took care of Abram's animals and the ones who took care of Lot's animals started quarreling. 8 Abram said to Lot, "We are close relatives. We shouldn't argue, and our men shouldn't be fighting one another. 9 There is plenty of land for you to choose from. Let's separate. If you go north, I'll go south; if you go south, I'll go north." 10 This happened before the Lord had destroyed the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. And when Lot looked around, he saw there was plenty of water in the Jordan Valley. All the way to Zoar the valley was as green as the garden of the Lord or the land of Egypt. 11 So Lot chose the whole Jordan Valley for himself, and as he started toward the east, he and Abram separated. 12 Abram stayed in the land of Canaan. But Lot settled near the cities of the valley and put up his tents not far from Sodom, 13 where the people were evil and sinned terribly against the Lord.

Church camp in May?

The management team is looking at a church camp possibly in May. We would like to estimate the level of interest so we can determine how many units to book. Accommodation is in 2/3 bedroom cottages. Please speak to Lyn or Linda.