

THIS MORNING

Welcome to our morning meeting live stream. Despite the need to follow government advice and follow social distancing and self-isolating measures, it's really important for us a church to stay connected and to keep listening to the ministry of God's word. We will be trying our best to do this on Sunday mornings through live streaming a morning meeting that includes preaching, Bible reading and sung worship. We will try our best to include the words to the songs in the live stream so you can sing along at home.

Live streaming is a step into the unknown for us and we've had to learn as we go. This might mean we're a bit hit-and-miss initially, so please bear with us if the live stream doesn't quite go to plan. You'll be able to access the live stream on You Tube as it happens. Hopefully, the service will then be available permanently for you to re-visit if you haven't been able to make it.

The Abbey Baptist Church You Tube channel can be found here

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCOG3sh3tACtxq0wyZR2-xMw/>. There should be a link to this in the instruction email you are sent. Once you find the channel, it will make it easier for you to find it again if you subscribe to the channel.

Please pray that the live stream will be successful and useful in helping us to access ministry from God's word.

THIS EVENING

We won't have live stream this evening, but feel free to link in to other on-line resources. Some good resources are:

Lansdowne Church, Bournemouth www.youtube.com/user/lansdownebaptist

Grace Church Didcot (Sunday 5pm live stream) www.reallifedidcot.org.uk

Desiring God www.desiringgod.org

Andy Christofides (daily devotional) <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCPEw5tMsQD3WPxFNBrkZIXQ>

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EXPECTANT

Jesus says, *"Be earnest and repent. Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me"* (Revelation 3v19b-20). Let's be praying for ourselves and for one another that these would be weeks of turning to Christ personally every day, opening the doors of our lives and hearts more widely to him, and enjoying a depth of personal fellowship with him that we haven't known before.

CONNECT GROUPS

Our Connect groups will play an important role in making sure each of us is cared for and connected with during the next few weeks. If you haven't yet joined a Connect group, please contact Clive to find out how to get connected.

During the week each of the Connect groups will be spending some time together using a video conferencing solution called Zoom. This will enable us to see each other and talk to each other as we discuss the relevant chapter in Enjoying God, pray together and share our needs and how we're getting on. You'll get more information about how this will work early next week.

Please keep in touch with each other in your groups, and make sure no-one is left isolated. If anyone has any particular need during the next few weeks, please let your Connect group leader know. Please keep your group updated with your situation (working arrangements; if you're self-isolating; if you're ill or if you have a particular need) so they can pray appropriately for you and offer help and support.

If the COVID-19 measures mean you're in particular financial hardship, please let one of the elders know, so that the church can assist you.

Desperate for Meaning (Jonah 4v1-11)

'Wherever we tap ultimate meaning in life, that's what we worship.' So says the non-Christian, US author David Foster Wallace. Scripture also tells us that to find ultimate meaning we must worship the right thing. *Where, in practice, do you look for ultimate meaning?* God asks both Jonah and us some telling questions:

1) Why are you so angry? (4v1-4)

In v1, Jonah is red-hot angry with God, despite a seemingly successful mission to Nineveh in chapter 3. Jonah's idol problem, his distorted love of Israel and its religion, continues to catch up with him. He cannot swallow God being gracious and compassionate to Israel's pagan enemy, Assyria (v2). His whole identity and sense of meaning in life is crumbling before his very eyes (v3). God asks if his anger is good (v4). Jonah's view of God has been wrong, but he continues to cling to a god of his own making. But God knows that Jonah is desperate for real meaning, meaning that can only come from knowing God personally and truly for Who he is.

2) Will you learn from Me? (4v5-10)

Jonah is still wanting God to change his mind (v5) and depart from Who he is. In these verses, God continues to woo Jonah with his love, and to counsel him using the shade plant and the worm which destroys it (v6-9). Jonah has a personal audience with the living God, he's looking the one who is Life in the face, and he says, I might as well be dead! God says to him again, in effect, "Why are you so angry?" (v9), 'Come to ME, trust my goodness and find rest.' Jonah is attached to 'stuff from God' (Israel, physical protection in Ch 2, the shade plant in 4v6-9). God wants him to receive his grace and be attached to him!

3) Will you treasure Me? (4v11)

The book of Jonah ends with a cliff-hanger: will Jonah receive God's grace and come to rest in God himself; will he see that the only ultimate Treasure worthy of the name is the Lord himself? The church in Laodicea also had an idol problem (Rev 3v19-22). Their love for God was 'like a morning mist, like a dew that easily evaporates'. Jesus loves them and is passionately grieved (Rev 3v16, 19). He offers to come into their lives and hearts so that they experience rich and lasting, personal fellowship with him (3v 20-21). Will they turn from their worthless idols, and let Christ in and be spiritually healed?