

Katoomba Baptist Church Bulletin

Oh, magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt His name together. Psalm 34:4

41 Waratah Street, Katoomba NSW 2780.

November 2020.

Pastor: Steve Cooper. Contact: mob. 0451 954 675; email cooper.steve.j@gmail.com.

Sunday service, 10am. In compliance with the NSW Government rules.

Katoomba Baptist Church website: <https://katoombabaptist.org.au>; Sunday messages on You Tube.

Bible Study: Second and Fourth Wednesday of the month, on Zoom

(to participate, please email Grahame McCraw: mowogmaca@gmail.com).

Church prayer meeting: Each Saturday, 9am. Prayer for Israel: Third Friday of the month, 1.30pm.

From the Pastor

In recent months, our church family has considered the theme of **prayer**. We've thought about prayer from different angles. The **Lord's Prayer** reminds us that we begin praying by recalling what God is like, then pray for what honours God, and finally pray about our own needs and the needs of others. The **Book of Habakkuk** shows us that the Lord invites us to be honest in prayer, expressing to him our complaints and questions. Through this honest dialogue, God is able to teach us more about himself and his ways. The **psalms** of the Old Testament provide fascinating models of prayer. Reflecting on the psalms encourages us to praise God in every situation that life brings us into.

These different ways of thinking about prayer have made me examine my own prayer life. There is always more to learn! Prayer is never easy. It involves us in hard work as we battle with evil in ourselves and others, coming humbly before the living God, and asking him to intervene in the mess of our world. God encourages us to pray by offering the love of our Father, the grace of the Son, and the comfort of the Holy Spirit. Yet, prayer is still hard work! We all need encouragement from each other to keep praying.

Our worship services on Sunday should help us to pray. Prayers are offered during the worship, and we can pray along with the person leading us in prayer. The Scripture readings and messages give insights in how to relate to God, and this can deepen and enrich our prayers. We should pray for each other. Let me encourage you to write a list of all the people you know in our church family, and pray for them regularly. If you attend our weekly church prayer meeting on Saturday mornings at 9am, you will discover inspiration for your own prayers.

The Book of Acts presents an attractive picture of the early church: 'They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer' (Acts 2:42). Notice that prayer was an important part of the life of the early church. I hope that is true for our church, and will continue to be. If I can do anything to help you to be a praying person, please let me know and I'd be delighted to assist.

Your companion on the journey,

Pastor Steve Cooper

Please pray

- for our Pastor Steve, for the Lord to guide him and bless his ministry
- for the Lord to help us through these times in which we live, and grant us strength and wisdom.
- for our leaders and authorities, for medical staff and indeed all those who are dealing with this crisis.
- that the Lord will minister to all who are undergoing trials and suffering, here and everywhere.
- for Israel, for the "Peace of Jerusalem" (Ps 122:6) and for the Gospel there "To the Jew first." (Rom 1:16).
- for our persecuted brothers and sisters in nations rich and poor and for those who persecute them.
- for the people whose livelihoods have been impacted by the Coronavirus, the drought and fires.
- with thanks to the Lord for all the rain. It was 12 months ago that the Gosper's Mountain Fire started...
- for revival in our community, state, nation, and throughout the world, and for our faith to increase.
- that the Lord will help us to use our gifts for His glory and to share the Gospel with others.
- that the Lord will draw to Him our unsaved loved ones and all for whom we have a burden.
- for missions to be fruitful, especially those we support as a church, and for the preservation of converts.
- that we continue to grow in Christian love as a church, serving the Lord and each other.
- Maranatha! ("Come, O Lord!")

**"Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks:
for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you" (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18).**

Church announcements:

1) Congregation & Members' Meeting. Join us on Sunday 8 November for a meeting for all regular attenders of our church. It starts after morning tea at 11.30am, in the church sanctuary. We'll hear reports from our Pastor and leaders, and a report about our church finances. We especially need church members to attend, so we can make decisions, and vote about applications for membership.

2) Have you thought about becoming a member of our church? All regular attenders of our church who are Christians, and have been baptised by full immersion as a believer in Christ, are invited to become members of Katoomba Baptist Church. Becoming a member means you make a **public stand** about what you believe, and your commitment to our church as **your** local church. It means you can **participate** as a voting person in our regular congregational meetings as we discern where the Lord Jesus might be leading our church and make important decisions together. If you would like to find out more, or apply to become a church member, please contact Pastor Steve.

3) Reformation Day. On Sunday 1 November, our church is celebrating Reformation Day. The Reformation began on 31 October 1517. On that day, in Germany, Martin Luther announced his views. He protested against teaching and practices of the Roman Catholic Church. The news spread like wildfire across Europe. Those who agreed with Luther eventually formed new churches. They emphasised the authority of God's Word, that salvation is by the free and undeserved grace of God, and that every believer comes into a direct relationship and union with Christ. The Baptist movement (founded in 1611) was part of these Reformation churches. Today, there is need to remind ourselves, and all churches, of the emphases of the Reformers.

4) KBC Prayer Meeting. C.H. Spurgeon compared the prayer meeting to the "ship's engine room" of the church. So, if you are led, please join the KBC prayer 'stokers' who meet every Saturday, 9am. A special time of blessing, worship, fellowship, praise as we "come boldly to the throne of grace" [Heb. 4:16] and glorify the Lord together.

**"I could not have written thousands of hymns if I had been hindered by the distractions of seeing all the interesting and beautiful objects that would have been presented to my notice."
[Fanny Crosby, explaining why she considered her blindness a gift from God.]**

From Voice of the Martyrs journal, October 2020 issue,

Editorial by Tony Benjamin, CEO, Voice of the Martyrs

... Pastors and families on the frontline of ministry in hostile nations face extreme pressure, as the challenges of ministry impact their daily lives. We have heard of cases where pastors are imprisoned for preaching the Gospel and the family land is forcibly confiscated so there is no means of support. Children are also prevented from attending school. How do they cope?

Other Christians and local churches will step in and help these families, where they are able. Prayer and fellowship are the life source that binds these believers together. When a family member has been imprisoned for preaching, the rest of the family will often continue the work of making a difference in the community and making disciples. ... I am encouraged by their perseverance and selflessness in pursuing the things of God in such dire circumstances. Their faith holds strong and shines through, regardless of their situation. Their request of us is that we pray that through all of the challenges they face, God may use them to show His unconditional love and compassion to those who do not know Him.

During this time of upheaval in the world, these families on the frontline need our continued prayer and support. These are the devoted men, women and children doing the heavy lifting for us as they make disciples and bring God's hands and feet to people in hostile nations. Continue to remember them, uphold them in your prayers ...

November birthdays: Grace J 2nd, Beth D 3rd, Bill F 25th

May the Lord bless you abundantly on your special day and through the year ahead in your walk with Him.

Spurgeon on success in prayer

It is very significant that before Christ fed the thousands, He made the disciples assess their provisions. It was good to let them see how low the food supply had become, for then when the crowds were fed, they could not say that the basket fed them or that the lad had done it. God will make us feel that our barley loaves are very little and our fishes are very small, and He will compel us to ask, "What are they among so many?" (John 6:9).

When the Saviour told His disciples to cast the net on the right side of the ship and they dragged such a mighty catch to land, He did not work the miracle until they had confessed that they had toiled all night and had caught nothing. They were thus taught that the success of their fishery was dependent on the Lord and that it was neither their nets nor the way of dragging them nor their skill and art in handling their vessels, but that altogether and entirely their success came from the Lord...

Thus I have shown you that for a successful season of prayer, the best beginning is a confession that we are poor and needy. [Charles Spurgeon, from the sermon "Pleading". Text: Psalm 70:5.]

Friday November 20th, 1.30pm — Prayer for Israel (please contact Irene Robertson for venue details)

"I will bring the one-third through the fire, will refine them as silver is refined, and test them as gold is tested. They will call on My name, and I will answer them. I will say, 'This is My people'; and each one will say, 'The LORD is my God.'" [Zechariah 13:9]

Contributions welcome: The KBC bulletin is available in print on the first Sunday service of the month and a longer PDF version of the Bulletin is on the church website: <https://katoombabaptist.org.au/library/bulletins/>. Contributions and enquiries can be made to the editor, Bill Fewer (email: hillbillyfewer@gmail.com).

Giving: Please remember that you can give online to Katoomba Baptist Church at BSB 704-922 and Account Number 100008926. Thank you for your faithful commitment to giving.

And as they (the messengers) went, they entered a village of the Samaritans, to prepare for Him.

But they did not receive Him, because His face was set for the journey to Jerusalem.

And when His disciples James and John saw this, they said, "Lord, do You want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them, just as Elijah did?"

But Jesus turned and rebuked them, and said, "You do not know what manner of spirit you are of. For the Son of Man did not come to destroy men's lives but to save them." And they went to another village.

[Luke 9:52-56]

Katoomba Baptist Church Bulletin Online Extra

** Please note that to access websites referred to in the Bulletin, please copy and paste the link into the address bar of your web browser.**

“We are saved by faith alone, but the faith that saves is never alone.”
[Martin Luther]

“What Is Reformation Day?” by Stephen Nichols, Oct 26, 2020 blog

[Sourced from Ligonier Ministries, <https://www.ligonier.org/blog/what-is-reformation-day/>, viewed 28/10/20]

A single event on a single day changed the world. It was October 31, 1517. Brother Martin, a monk and a scholar, had struggled for years with his church, the church in Rome. He had been greatly disturbed by an unprecedented indulgence sale. The story has all the makings of a Hollywood blockbuster. Let's meet the cast.

First, there is the young bishop—too young by church laws—Albert of Mainz. Not only was he bishop over two bishoprics, he desired an additional archbishopric over Mainz. This, too, was against church laws. So Albert appealed to the pope in Rome, Leo X. From the De Medici family, Leo X greedily allowed his tastes to exceed his financial resources. Enter the artists and sculptors, Raphael and Michelangelo.

When Albert of Mainz appealed for a papal dispensation, Leo X was ready to deal. Albert, with the papal blessing, would sell indulgences for past, present, and future sins. All of this sickened the monk Martin Luther. Can we buy our way into heaven? Luther had to speak out.

But why October 31? November 1 held a special place in the church calendar as All Saints' Day. On November 1, 1517, a massive exhibit of newly acquired relics would be on display at Wittenberg, Luther's home city. Pilgrims would come from all over, genuflect before the relics, and take hundreds, if not thousands, of years off time in purgatory. Luther's soul grew even more vexed. None of this seemed right.

Martin Luther, a scholar, took quill in hand, dipped it in his inkwell and penned his Ninety-Five Theses on October 31, 1517. These were intended to spark a debate, to stir some soul-searching among his fellow brothers in the church. The Ninety-Five Theses sparked far more than a debate. The Ninety-Five Theses also revealed the church was far beyond rehabilitation. It needed a reformation. The church—and the world—would never be the same.

One of Luther's Ninety-Five Theses simply declares, “The Church's true treasure is the gospel of Jesus Christ.” That alone is the meaning of Reformation Day. The church had lost sight of the gospel because it had long ago papered over the pages of God's Word with layer upon layer of tradition. Mere tradition often brings about systems of works, of earning your way back to God. It was true of the Pharisees, and it was true of medieval Roman Catholicism. Didn't Christ Himself say, “My yoke is easy and My burden is light”? Reformation Day celebrates the joyful beauty of the liberating gospel of Jesus Christ.

What is Reformation Day? It is the day the light of the gospel broke forth out of darkness. It was the day that began the Protestant Reformation. It was a day that led to Martin Luther, John Calvin, John Knox, and many other Reformers helping the church find its way back to God's Word as the only supreme authority for faith and life and leading the church back to the glorious doctrines of justification by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone. It kindled the fires of missionary endeavors, it led to hymn writing and congregational singing, and it led to the centrality of the sermon and preaching for the people of God. It is the celebration of a theological, ecclesiastical, and cultural transformation.

So we celebrate Reformation Day. This day reminds us to be thankful for our past and to the monk turned Reformer. What's more, this day reminds us of our duty, our obligation, to keep the light of the gospel at the center of all we do.

“God with all His omnipotence at His disposal never wastes anything. He never sends a flood if a shower will do; never sends a fortune if a shilling will do; never sends an army if a man will do. And He never thunders if a whisper will do.” [F.W. Boreham, *The Whisper of God*]

From Tim Chester, "A Meal With Jesus"

We Live between Good Friday and Easter Sunday

One of the problems is that we know the end of the Emmaus story so well. We know that Jesus is risen. So we find it hard to enter into the disappointment and grief of these disciples. "We had hoped," they say (Luke 24:21).

Yet many people today are following their own version of the Emmaus road. They're walking away from hope. They're walking in disappointment. For many this involves walking away from the church.

Christ doesn't begin with a resurrection pronouncement. He begins with a question: "What is this conversation that you are holding with each other as you walk? . . ." (Luke 24:17). He gives them space to tell their story, to share their pain, to speak their disappointment. Luke captures the drama of it: "And they stood still, looking sad" (v. 17). They're walking, but they have to stop before they can begin.

We need to begin our interaction with people with a question much more often than we do. Only as we enter into their stories, their hopes, and their disappointments will our message connect and have meaning. We mustn't fear others' pain or hide our own, for Christ is with us even if we don't always recognize him.

... It's not just individuals who are walking their own version of the Emmaus road. Our whole world is between Good Friday and Easter Sunday. "We had hoped," our culture says. Modernity was full of hope, full of visions of progress. Capitalism. Socialism. Scientific progress. Liberalism. All were driven by derivative forms of Christian hope. All shared a sense that history was an onward march. But postmodernity recognizes the dark side of progress. The endemic poverty. The pollution of the planet. The social fragmentation. It distrusts the grand narratives of progress. "We had hoped."

We live in a world in which the biblical story seems out of place. Christianity seems passé and anachronistic. We live in a world in which, functionally, God is dead. That was the cry of the German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche. Nietzsche claimed not only that "God is dead," but that it's we who've killed him. For Nietzsche this "truth" represents the triumph of human freedom. We no longer need God to make our way in the world. We can live without him. So public discourse takes place without God. Our culture is on the Emmaus road, heading away from Jerusalem.

... Yet this is where we belong. ... In a broken world. Christ's resurrection is the promise of a new world. But we have not yet received resurrection bodies and our world has not yet been renewed (Rom. 8:22-25). It remains under the sign of the cross. We live in a godless and godforsaken world — a world still under God's curse. As Christians we have resurrection life, but we have it so we might live the way of the cross. We live between the cross and resurrection, between Good Friday and Easter Sunday.

For now Christ is incognito. He is what the Reformers, following Paul, called "the hidden Christ". Paul says: "For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory" (Col. 3:3-4). The return of Christ is more often described in the New Testament as a manifestation. The reign of Christ is now hidden. But one day it will be manifest. All the earth will see his glory and every knee will bow.

For now, though, we live as disciples of the cross. We embrace obscurity, hiddenness, weakness, marginality, and smallness. ... The last shall be first. This is God's way. His kingdom grows unnoticed by the world. It's yeast in dough. It's seed that grows unseen. It's through the cross that Christ reigns in the world.

So we walk alongside people on the Emmaus road not as victors, nor as people with all the answers, but as fellow human beings, fellow sinners, and fellow strugglers. Otherwise the rumour of resurrection will always sound incredible or glib.

... We live at a unique time in history. Christianity no longer dominates our culture. We live after Christendom in an increasingly secular culture. The Bible story seems out of place and archaic. People have removed Christ from their worldview ...

But don't despair. This is a moment of opportunity to rediscover authentic apostolic Christianity shaped by the cross. The glory, power, and wisdom of Christ, says Paul in 1 Corinthians 1, are seen in the shame, weakness and foolishness of the cross. And they're seen in the cross-centred lives of those who follow Christ. Our resurrection life is revealed in our conformity to Christ in his death (2 Cor. 4:10-12). We make God known to a post-Christian world by revealing him in cross-centred discipleship.

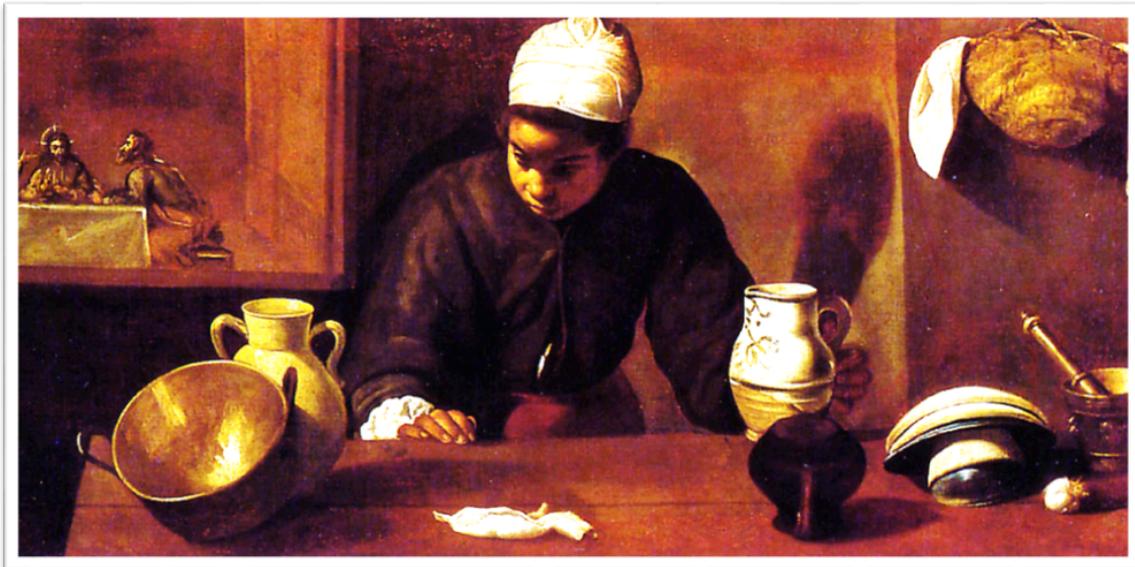
... In Emmaus Jesus makes himself known at the moment in the story at which he disappears: "Their eyes were opened, and they recognized him. And he vanished from their sight" (Luke 24:31). Jesus disappears, but his word

remains. This is Luke's message to us. How do we make Christ known? Through the Bible. It may not sound trendy, but it's God way. God rules through his Word.

... There's an important sense in which the messages of secularism and the cross are the same: God is dead, and the world is without God. The difference is that this is where the message of secularism ends, but it's where the message of the cross begins. The scientific revolution, the Enlightenment, and modernity all lead to this terrible conclusion: God is dead, and we live in a world without him.

But this is where the message of the cross begins. God has died, and the world was without God. But on the third day he rose again. Forsaken by God, Christ took upon himself the curse of humanity to redeem the world. Now risen as Lord, he lays claim to all of life. The reason we're sent out in mission is that all authority has been given to the Son. The world was without God, but now it's claimed in Christ's name.

[Tim Chester, *A Meal with Jesus: Discovering grace, community & mission around the table*. Wheaton, Ill.; Crossway, 2011. pp. 127-31; 133; 137-8.]



Diego Velázquez. "Kitchen Maid with the Supper of Emmaus", 1618.

From Voice of the Martyrs website, <https://vom.com.au/pakistan-victims-family-goes-into-hiding>, viewed 27/10/20

PAKISTAN: Victim's Family Goes into Hiding, Oct 22, 2020

Marilyn Asif, along with her four young children, has had to flee for safety after her husband Asif Pervaiz was sentenced to death for blasphemy.

Asif, 37, has already spent seven years in jail after a blasphemy case was filed against him in 2013. He was given the death penalty on 8 September.

The case against Asif was brought after the Christian refused to take part in Muslim prayers at his factory or convert to Islam.

Asif lost his phone, which was later used to send a so-called blasphemous text message to his supervisor at work. Asif believes the text was actually sent by his accuser to incriminate him. Asif's wife is fearful for the safety of her children.

The case has echoes of that of Asia Bibi, who languished in jail for eight years awaiting the death penalty before her lawyer had the case thrown out by the Supreme Court. A price was put on Asia Bibi's head and her family were driven into hiding.

After the Supreme Court overturned the verdict, mobs brought cities to a standstill, calling for the army to mutiny and overthrow the government. After Asia was released, she and her family had to leave the country.

Asif has the same lawyer as Asia, Saif ul Malook, a Muslim who risks his life to defend Christians. VOM's ministry partner Release International is helping Asif and his family.

Source: Release International

- *Pray the Lord's protection will be upon Asif, Marylin and their children. Pray they will see the Lord's merciful hand at work in their daily lives so that they will not despair but continue to trust in Him during this trying time.*
 - *Praise God for the courage and kindness of Saiful Malook. Ask the Lord to provide him with immeasurable spiritual blessing. Pray too for favour and wisdom as he defends Asif.*
 - *Pray the nation of Pakistan will bring change to its notorious blasphemy laws and guard against injustice.*
-

“Perspective” a poem by J.M. Woolley

Standing still, waiting -
Admire the view!
Or will you strain forward?
Oh, which will you do?

In plotting and planning
Some folks spend their lives,
In setting out futures,
On which they rely.

Yet life shows us troubles
We never foresaw,
And yet also blessings
That weren't guessed before.

How much are you scheming?
Is that time spent well?
Or shall we live, waiting,
While living as well?

Let's praise the God of all creation for His wonderful works!



“All things bright and beautiful, all creatures big and small...”. This is a photo of a Metallic Shield bug on a Lilly Pilly blossom.

Thanks Maree for this beautiful photo and for the caption.

If anyone has taken a photo that glorifies God in creation and wants to share it, please email it to me at hillbillyfewer@gmail.com. You could also send in a short description or testimony too if you feel led.

A Prayer in Dark Times

*When mystery hides Thee from the sight of faith and hope;
when pain turns even love to dust;
when life is bitter to the taste and our song of joy
dies down in silence;
then, Father, do for us that which is past our power to do for
ourselves.
Break through our darkness with Thy light.
Show us Thyself in Jesus suffering on a Tree,
rising from the grave,
reigning from a throne with all power and love for us unchanging.
So shall our fear be gone
and our feet set upon a radiant path.*

From Hebridean Altars (Celtic Daily Prayer)

“F.W. Boreham: Telling Stories, Exalting the Cross” by Austin B. Tucker

**[Sourced from Preaching: leading the Church, proclaiming the Word,
<https://www.preaching.com/articles/past-masters/f-w-boreham-telling-stories-exalting-the-cross/>,
Viewed 27/10/20]**

F. W. Boreham (1871-1959) was introduced once to a gathering of preachers in Edinburgh, Scotland as “the man whose name is on all our lips, whose books are on all our shelves, and whose illustrations are in all our sermons.”¹

Frank William Boreham did have a unique way of illuminating a text through the life story of a famous person in history or literature. Let’s sketch a little of Boreham’s own life story first. Then we will talk more about his unique style of narrative preaching.

*Boreham was born March 1871 in Turnbridge Wells, England and born again New Year’s Day of 1888. From early childhood both parents encouraged his interest in reading biography and other literature. He preached his first sermon at age seventeen and three years later published *The Whisper of God*. It was the first of more than fifty books of sermons and essays in his unique style.*

Boreham was probably the last student that Spurgeon personally interviewed for entrance into his pastor’s school. He attended Spurgeon’s College but did not graduate. Instead, when James A. Spurgeon returned to London from New Zealand to continue the work of his more famous brother, he selected Boreham to answer the plea of a young congregation on the southeast plain of the South Island of New Zealand. So, in January 1895, Boreham left England and traveled halfway around the world where he would preach, write and become world famous.

While Boreham was still a young man, the Rev. J. J. Doke, an older minister, counseled him to develop methodical reading habits. “But what shall I read?” asked Boreham, “Give me a start.”

*“Read Gibbon’s *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*,” the older man said. He urged him to read it through and to follow up with a more intense study of every period in which Gibbon stirs his interest. Boreham started the plan the next day and completed all four volumes of Gibbon in one month. This began a lifetime habit of buying and reading one book per week. He loved history and especially biography.*

While still a young preacher in London, he sought every opportunity to hear the great pulpit masters. He sat at the feet of F. B. Meyer, Joseph Parker, and Charles H. Spurgeon. He heard D. L. Moody when the great evangelist visited from America. This attention to masters of his craft was not wasted. He recognized the relative weakness of his own sermon delivery and set about to strengthen it. For example, he noted that the pulpit masters had a great vocal range and flexibility that he lacked. Like Demosthenes, he went to the seashore to practice against the crashing breakers.

When he became pastor in the small agricultural community on New Zealand’s plain, he was still speaking in a high-pitched, rapid and monotonous voice. He shut himself in his study regularly to practice vocal exercises to improve range and pitch. He rehearsed delivery of his sermons, including gestures. His only critic, his young bride, helped him. “You still speak too fast, dear.”

He took pains to hear and analyze every notable lawyer, politician, lecturer or preacher who came within range. Before he left that pastorate, he had developed a pleasing and distinctive delivery. He had clear enunciation, flexible, well-modulated tones with the long-drawn out vowels that came to distinguish his delivery.

*After six years at Mosgiel, he accepted the call of Baptist Tabernacle in Hobart, Tasmania, an island state two hundred miles south of the Australian mainland. There he attracted more attention as a speaker and writer. The newspaper editorialized right away about his "oratorical flight" at a temperance rally and described him as "a pleasing and effective speaker" who would have "both ears" of the Tasmanians."*²

*In the middle of this pastorate, he made a decision to prepare only one new sermon a week so that he might continue to research and write. He continued his reading of biography. While working on his marathon series on *Texts That Made History*, at age forty, he found in a used bookstore dozens of biographical studies. He bargained with the shopkeeper for the whole lot at a shilling each and read them every one.*

He would eventually produce more than fifty significant books, plus 2,500 articles and many more editorials for newspapers. He also wrote hundreds of carefully composed personal letters. Many of these were part of a regular evangelistic outreach to those in his community who were yet uncommitted to Christ. During World War I he kept up also a faithful pastoral correspondence with every service man away from his church.

But supremely F. W. Boreham was a preacher. He has been criticized for depending too much on storytelling for the content of his sermons. It is true that he is not an expositor if that means one must take an extended passage of Scripture and explain it in all its detail. But few preachers could take a key verse of the Bible and make it live for the congregation as Boreham could.

Consider this sample typical of his interpretation of the life of a great person in history, always through the lens of a life-shaping Scripture text. Such sermons usually bore a simple title such as "Michael Faraday's Text." In it Boreham interprets the character through the living text and at the same time sheds light on the text through the life of the historical character.

Let's slip into a sermon already in progress. The preacher has introduced his subject, the great scientist Michael Faraday. Now the preacher wishes to introduce his text. The scene is Faraday's deathbed, a scene preachers of his generation were not reluctant to describe. The preacher is saying:

As he lay dying they tried to interview the professor, but it was the little child in him that answered them.

"What are your speculations?" they inquired.

*"Speculations" he asked, in wondering surprise. "Speculations! I have none! I am resting on certainties. 'I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day!'" And, reveling like a child in those cloudless simplicities, his great soul passed away."*³

In 1916, F. W. Boreham accepted the call of a church in a suburb of Melbourne. There he served as pastor for the next dozen years. Then in 1928 he entered a new and final phase of ministry: he resigned the pastorate to give full time to writing and itinerant preaching. When he was not on a preaching tour in these last years, he delivered a regular lunchtime sermon at the Scots Church in Melbourne.

The Hobart Mercury published some 3,000 of Boreham's weekly editorials over 47 years (1912-1959). Another newspaper, the Melbourne Age, published many others.

Boreham continued writing for newspapers until he retired in 1956. Three years later he died.

*It was largely from his regular weekly discipline of writing sermons and editorial essays that he published some 46 books. His last book, *The Tide Comes In* (1958), appeared only months before his death. Many of his books met wide acclaim all over the English-speaking world, none more so than the series of five books published between 1920 and 1928 from 125 sermons under the banner, *Texts That Made History*. They appeared in five famous books poetically entitled *A Bunch of Everlastings*, *A Handful of Stars*, *A Casket of Cameos*, *A Faggot of Torches*, and *A Temple of Topaz*.*

There is today a lively trade in them on the Internet. Each sermon is based on a text that Boreham thought explained the essence of a famous person in history such as Martin Luther, William Penn, Aldus Huxley, William Booth, Andrew Boner, and William Carey. Others are based on texts that figure prominently in the story of fictional characters like Robinson Crusoe and Uncle Tom.

*Some criticized his use of fictional characters to illustrate divine grace. Boreham did not apologize, but he did explain that a fictional story might convey divine truth as "a portrait of humanity, painted by a master hand." He said, "Robinson Crusoe's Text is really Daniel Defoe's Text; the text that stands embedded in Uncle Tom's Cabin is the text that Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stow had enthroned within her heart."*⁴

Notable about Boreham's homiletical style is the way he captured attention in the opening words of the sermon. Almost any in the series would serve as an example. They are not constructed with cookie cutter sameness, but they invariably plunge the listener into an attention-getting narrative from the life of the character. This becomes the canvas for painting the Scripture text. Take "Hudson Taylor's Text" as an example.

The day on which James Hudson Taylor – then a boy in his teens – found himself confronted by that tremendous text was, as he himself testified in old age, "a day that he could never forget." It was a day that China can never forget; a day that the world can never forget. It was a holiday; everybody was away from home; and the boy found time hanging heavily upon his hands. In an aimless way he wandered, during the afternoon, into his father's library, and poked about among the shelves.

"I tried," he says, "to find some book with which to while away the leaden hours. Nothing attracting me, I turned over a basket of pamphlets and selected from among them a tract that looked interesting. I knew that it would have a story at the commencement and a moral at the close; but I promised myself that I would enjoy the story and leave the rest. It would be easy to put away the tract as soon as it should seem prosy."

He scampers off to the stable-loft, throws himself on the hay, and plunges into the book. He is captivated by the narrative, and finds it impossible to drop the book when the story comes to an end. He reads on and on. He is rewarded by one great golden word whose significance he has never before discovered: "The Finished Work of Christ!"

The theme entrances him; and at last he only rises from his bed in the soft hay that he may kneel on the hard floor of the loft and surrender his young life to the Saviour who had surrendered everything for him. If, he asked himself, as he lay upon the hay, if the whole work was finished, and the whole debt paid upon the Cross, what is there left for me to do?

"And then," he tells us, "there dawned upon me the joyous conviction that there was nothing in the world to be done but to fall upon my knees, accept the Saviour and praise Him for evermore."⁵

In little more than 300 words, the preacher has our attention and has directed it to his text and the theme of his sermon. The text is John 19:30 "It is finished." Boreham held up to the light that three-word jewel of a text to let us see the sparkle of one facet after another through the sermon. First he stated the text, then he stated it again in the context in which it is found in Scripture. Then he quoted the key sentence in Hudson Taylor's testimony of the dawning conviction that the work of redemption was indeed finished.

Next the preacher showed how that one Greek word was used in ancient times. "It was a farmer's word. When into his herd, there was born an animal so beautiful and shapely that it seemed absolutely destitute of faults and defects, the farmer gazed upon the creature with proud, delighted eyes. Tetelestai! he said, tetelestai!"

In half-dozen lines or so, he lifted up the word as an artist's word admiring his masterpiece, a priestly word looking at the sacrificial lamb without spot or blemish, and finally the Lamb of God himself who "cried with a loud voice Tetelestai! And gave up the ghost."

Next the preacher turned to talk about the joy of finishing and finishing well. He drew on literature for examples from Livingston's journal, from historian Henry Buckle, from missionary Henry Martyn, from Charles Dickens, and several others who "long, but long in vain, for the priceless privilege of finishing their work."

In this vein the preacher continued. He reached the high point of the sermon to quote from Hudson Taylor's autobiography a poem that included the stanza:

'It is Finished! yes, indeed,
Finished every jot;
Sinner, this is all you need;
Tell me, is it not?

Several other examples from history and literature follow, extolling the virtue of finishing. The sermon text comes again and again like the chorus of a hymn:

'The Finished Work of Christ!
'Tetelestai! Tetelestai!
'It is finished!'

*Boreham's unique homiletical style in his books and in the pulpit found a great welcome from the public, but some other preachers criticized them as theologically shallow. If a modern reader is looking for theological jargon in Boreham's writings, he will search in vain. This is no accident, for Boreham said: "Theology is to a sermon what the skeleton is to the body: it gives shape and support to the preacher's utterance without itself being visible. It is very noticeable that Jesus Himself seldom or never became theological."*⁶

*In his autobiography, Boreham said, "The one passionate desire of my heart has been to lead my hearers to Christ. I have never entered a pulpit without feeling that, if only people could catch a vision of the Saviour, they would have no alternative but to lay their devotion at his feet. My soul has caught fire when ever I have exalted the cross."*⁷

F. W. Boreham was a master storyteller, but this skill was more than a mere attention getter. Like the parables of Jesus, Boreham's stories were the vessel for bringing the water of life to thirsty souls. His stories did more than capture attention; they also conveyed the gospel truth and stuck in the memory of all who heard them.

Notes.

1. W.A. Van Leen, www.ccgm.org.
2. T. Howard Crago, *The Story of F. W. Boreham*. Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1981, p. 121.
3. F. W. Boreham, *A Handful of Stars*. Chicago: Judson, 1950 reprint. pp.183-185. Copyright by F. W. Boreham, 1922.
4. Crago, 180.
5. F. W. Boreham, "Hudson Taylor's Text" *A Handful of Stars*. Philadelphia: Judson reprint, 1950 (copyright, 1922, by F. W. Boreham).
6. Crago, 120.
7. F. W. Boreham, *My Pilgrimage*. Judson, 1950, p.20, quoted in Clyde Fant and Wm. Pinson, *Twenty Centuries of Great Preaching*, VIII, 189.

A Short Video for you

"The Four Cups of the Passover" from the Friends of Israel Gospel Ministry

A teaching on the significance and meaning behind the four cups of the Passover.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FsVFmY4q7p4>

[Thanks, Michael, for this contribution]

And another

"The Apostle" Movie CLIP - Yelling at the Lord (1997) HD

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q5v5DOEF45E&t=3s>

We have been studying the impassioned prayers of Habakkuk. If it is our custom to pray quietly to the Lord, we may find it hard to imagine what unrestrained praying looks like. Even prayers that argue with God. This dramatization from the film "The Apostle" may make that clearer for us!

Some music for you

1) Softly & Tenderly (Official Lyric Video) - Kristyn Getty, Vince Gill, Ellie Holcomb, Sierra Hull

Beautiful version, performed in a gentle, country style, and featuring an instrumental passage with the evocative melody of "Ashokan Farewell" (the theme to Ken Burns' "The Civil War" documentary series).

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ck58d3BMBX0>

2) Mahalia Jackson - His Eye Is On The Sparrow

Perhaps the world's greatest ever gospel singer at her soaring best.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eM_JRAPSwVM

3) To God Be The Glory (Royal Albert Hall, London)

Thousands of voices joining together to sing Fanny Crosby's beloved hymn.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-15v9iworAU>

*Thanksgiving for God's Righteous Judgment
To the Chief Musician. Set to "Do Not Destroy." A Psalm of Asaph. A Song.*

PSALM 75

We give thanks to You, O God, we give thanks!
For Your wondrous works declare that Your name is near.

“When I choose the proper time,
I will judge uprightly.
The earth and all its inhabitants are dissolved;
I set up its pillars firmly. *Selah*

“I said to the boastful, ‘Do not deal boastfully,’
And to the wicked, ‘Do not lift up the horn.
Do not lift up your horn on high;
Do not speak with a stiff neck.’”

For exaltation comes neither from the east
Nor from the west nor from the south.
But God is the Judge:
He puts down one,
And exalts another.
For in the hand of the Lord there is a cup,
And the wine is red;
It is fully mixed, and He pours it out;
Surely its dregs shall all the wicked of the earth
Drain and drink down.

But I will declare forever,
I will sing praises to the God of Jacob.
“All the horns of the wicked I will also cut off,
But the horns of the righteous shall be exalted.”