

# Broxbourne with Wormley Final Sermon

## 13 March 2011

### Props:

- Tray with something large on it covered by a towel
- Giant Jenga

The service today is very much a reflection of me and I'm sure a psychologist could have a field day working out my psyche from it!

I've not got that much that I want to say to you. The last 3 years have gone by pretty quickly but looking back I'm pleased with how they've gone. In many ways they've been fairly tumultuous – As a family I've been ordained, Beatrix has been born, Amalie has settled into school and Alison has got back into work. From a personal point of view I arrived in the parish with some definite targets that I've been able to meet – both at work and outside. We've also made some really great friends who I know we'll keep in touch with.

Some of you have probably heard me preach getting on for 100 times now! The most astute of you will have worked out a long time ago that, quite frankly, I've only got 1 sermon message to deliver! I just disguise it and slip it into whatever passage that I'm preaching on that day. I won't embarrass anybody by asking if they can tell me what the message is!

The readings and the songs that I've chosen for all 3 services today are all, for different reasons, very personal to me. In many ways they form the core of my faith in God (except perhaps for the last song at Broxbourne, which has simply got a cracking tune!).

So what is it that I believe to be true about God? What are the 3 things that I would like to be remembered for saying here in the Parish of Broxbourne and Wormley?

### 1. Each of YOU is special

The first is, that each of you here today is valuable and significant. You're worth so much. It's not because of what you do, how much you've achieved or anything else – it's just because of who you are! Each of you is unique and special, purely for being you!

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### 0800 and 0915 Congregations:

We've heard today one of my favourite gospel passages – the raising from the dead of the widow's son at Nain. There was no reason at all for Jesus to perform that miracle – it's just that he knew how special and valuable that dead boy was to his mother and he happened to be in the neighbourhood at the right time. He had compassion on the poor Mother and he loved her for who she was. He didn't want her to go through life completely on her own in the world and so he did something about it. The reason I chose this gospel reading today, is that it shows the heart of God for us, his children.

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If God had a fridge then I think your picture would be stuck on it. If God had a wallet, your photo would be in it. God could have chosen anywhere in the world to set up his home – but he chose to live in your heart if you'll open up the door to him.

## 2. You are immeasurably loved

The 2<sup>nd</sup> thing that I've tried to show you since I've been here is that you're incredibly deeply loved by God. For years I battled with this personally. I knew the things I'd done wrong and couldn't believe that I was loveable to God. That's why I chose Psalm 32 to read today. Whatever it is that makes us doubt God's love for us, then this Psalm gives reassurance that God still loves us.

When we tell God that we're sorry for messing up, God hears and forgives us. It took me a lot of heartache and counselling to realise this for myself. But what Psalm 32 simply says is that once we've said "sorry" to God, it's like a cover has been placed over our sins. God doesn't go round trying to peek under it – it's been dealt with...finished.

### **Show tray**

God covers our sin and sweeps it away. He gives us a safe hiding place and surrounds us with songs of deliverance. Each one of you is immeasurably loved by God – and nothing you've done will change that.

The way that I've best found this to be true is through the love and acceptance that my friends have shown to me when they've found out what I'm really like!

## 3. God is always with you

The third thing I've tried to show you over my time with you, is that God is always there for you – you never have to face life alone.

Psalm 62 says that our soul finds rest in God alone and our hope is in him...he is a rock for us and he won't be shaken. He's a strong tower and a refuge that will weather the worst of life's storms.

### **Demonstrate with Jenga**

God is always there for you – faithful and strong – and he promises not to leave you. He won't collapse or let you down.

1. You're all valuable and important for who you are
2. You're each loved so much
3. You never have to walk through life completely alone

If you let God be a part of your life, even if you're not sure how to do that, then I think those 3 statements are true. That's what I've tried to model and tell you – imperfectly of course – as I've preached, taught, baptised your children, married some of you, taken the assemblies of your children and the funerals of some of your families. This is the message that I now want to take into the RAF & the armed forces. Thanks for putting up with me!