

The Watford Word

www.watfordchurchofchrist.org

What's on

Sunday 31 March - 10:30AM. Malcolm speaking on Easter Sunday

Sunday 07 April - 10:30AM. Stefan Wolmarans speaking

Sunday 14 April - 10:30AM. Visiting speaker Dr Sean St. John (<https://seanstjean.com/>)

Sunday 21 April - 10:30AM.

Sunday 28 April - 10:30AM. Malcolm speaking

Pentecost Sunday 19 May - 10:30AM.

International Sunday and international food

Sunday 02 June - 10:30AM. Visiting speaker Dr John Oakes (<https://evidenceforchristianity.org/>)

A New Creation

What is a 'Spiritual Life'?

This question is the subject of the latest AIM UK & Ireland session (<https://aimukandireland.com/>). What does it mean for a follower of Jesus to live a spiritual life? What do you think of the definition that follows?

A 'with-God' life that effects an on-going transformation towards Christ-likeness through the Spirit.

The sentence above is largely based on the following Scripture:

"...all of us, with unveiled faces, seeing the glory of the Lord as though reflected in a mirror, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord, the Spirit." 2 Corinthians 3.18

God Desires Fellowship

How do we live this? What does it look like in 'real life'? First, let's reflect on the fact that it must be possible. God would not promise the impossible. We know that his desire to enjoy companionship with us humans is something hard-baked into his heart. In Eden he looked forward to a country walk with Adam & Eve,

"Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the LORD God among the trees of the garden. But the LORD God called to the man, "Where are you?"" Genesis 3.8-9

At the end of time he will unite earth and heaven, *"I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Look! God's dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God." Revelation 21.2-3*

Our Father deeply desires fellowship with us. For example, take Psalm 23 - penned by David:

"The LORD is my shepherd; there is nothing I lack." (Psalm 23:1 HCSB)

Jesus as the door to a blessed spiritual life

What kind of life did (does) Jesus offer his disciples? Consider some of these Scriptures and what they tell you about the kind of relationship Jesus anticipates having with his followers:

A well-fitting yoke

"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light." Matthew 11.28-30

A full life

"The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full." John 10.10

Friendship

"Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends. You are my friends if you do what I command. I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you." John 15.13-17

How does it feel to see Jesus as a friend - someone to walk through life with? Yes, he is our teacher, master, Lord and King (and we do well to respect him in those roles), but we travel with Jesus as a friend. What does this life look like and feel like? The beatitudes sum it up:

“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

“Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

“Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

“Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.

“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

“Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” Matt 5:3-10

"These 'blessings', the 'wonderful news' that he's announcing, are not saying 'try hard to live like this.' They are saying that people who already are like that are in good shape. They should be happy and celebrate." – Wright, N. T.

This is the good life. Do we believe this? Are we confident it is attainable - when life is so hard?

The short version of a much longer answer (which is the rest of the AIM Spiritual Life Module - you are welcome to sign up if you wish) is to explore ways of creating greater awareness of Jesus as present, available, attentive, compassionate and generous (as we talked about last Sunday). Something called 'spiritual disciplines' are channels for the transformation that is available through the Spirit. Practices like prayer, meditation on Scripture, fasting, solitude, silence and many more create avenues for awareness of God.

"Spiritual disciplines can do nothing. They can only get us to the place where something can be done." Richard J. Foster -- Celebration of Discipline: The Path to Spiritual Growth

Would you like a 'spiritual life'? A life of friendship, growth, maturity and transformation to ever-increasing Christ-likeness? Then why not explore the field of spiritual disciplines? I recommend starting with the AIM course and reading Foster's book 'Celebration of Discipline'.

Your brother, Malcolm

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Homelessness in Watford

If you find someone homeless in Watford and want to help them find accommodation you can advise them to do one of three things:

1. Call New Hope on 0300 012 0168
2. Go to <https://thestreetlink.org.uk>
3. Direct them to — The Haven, 4 Whippendell Road, Watford, WD18 7LU

<https://www.newhope.org.uk/thehaven>

Watford Contribution Details

If you want to donate to the work of the church here, please go to this link and look for the 'ICC Missions standing order and gift aid form' — <https://watfordchurchofchrist.org/podcasts>

Watford Media

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCj9Qa8D9zumJZdoAtARDUww>

Podcast: <https://www.podbean.com/pu/pbblog-aiinq-1aef90>

Collection for Afghanistan



WATFORD CHRISTMAS COLLECTION

<https://www.hopeworldwide.org.uk/give>

To give online:



- Select amount
- Tick "I am a UK taxpayer" if you are one (this gets an additional 25% from the government)
- Select "Afghanistan General" from designation dropdown
- Put "Watford Collection" in the comment box

If you can give via bank transfer please see Watford Word for details

If you want to make a bank transfer, please put reference Afghanistan / Watford (or abbreviation which makes it clear that it's for Afghanistan).

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