

The Watford Word

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What's on

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

Sunday 21 April - 10:30AM. Charl speaking

Sunday 28 April - 10:30AM. Malcolm speaking

Sunday 05 May - 10:30AM. Lance speaking

Sunday 12 May - 10:30AM. Malcolm speaking

Pentecost Sunday 19 May - 10:30AM.

International Sunday and international food

Sunday 26 May - 10:30AM. Malcolm speaking

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

Sunday 14 July - 10:30AM. Kerry Mathurin speaks

Next Sunday - Dr Sean St. Jean

I am delighted that we can welcome Dr Sean St. Jean and his wife Erin to our fellowship next Sunday. Sean has become a dear friend to me, and will be part of the team running the retreat mentioned below. He is a member of our sister church in Vancouver Canada, teaches graduate social workers as a professor, and has his own private therapist practice. His book, *Spiritual Trauma: A Guide to Healing Your Heart From Church Hurts* came out recently. I highly recommend it.

Malcolm

Coxs Away

Penny and myself are away this coming week at the first ever spiritual wellness retreat for leaderships of our churches across the UK & Ireland. Please pray for us to hear God's voice and find spiritual refreshment. We'll respond to urgent messages, but all other communication will need to wait until we are back on Saturday.

Malcolm

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New Creation - New Picture

Exploring Our Picture of God

What is your picture of God? We're diving into deep stuff today: Our impressions of God and how they affect us. Let's take a stroll down memory lane and see how our views of God have evolved over the years.

Childhood Impressions

Remember when you were a kid? For me, God seemed distant and holy, except when I thought about Jesus. He made God feel closer, more like a friend than a distant deity. As I got older, the hymns and anthems I sang at church started making God seem more majestic, like a huge, powerful, creative force.

Why Does Our Picture of God Matter?

Tozer said, *"What comes into our mind when we think about God is the most important thing about us."*

It's so true, isn't it? Our image of God shapes who we are and how we relate to others. If we see God as loving, we're more likely to be loving ourselves. But if we see Him as angry or distant, it can mess with our heads.

Dallas Willard put it this way: *"The single most important thing about us is our idea of God and its associated images."*

Challenging Our Assumptions

Think about where your ideas of God came from. Were they from your parents, teachers, or that old guy at church who always preached fire and brimstone? How do we find a better picture of God? Consider the following points.

1. God is always greater (and better) than we imagine

"Great is the LORD, and highly to be praised, And His greatness is unsearchable." - Psalm 145:3 NASB

Give this verse a few moments of your time.

Have you ever thought about how amazing God really is? His greatness, power, love, and light—

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it's mind-blowing. We'll need to meditate on God's greatness if we're to get anywhere near an accurate picture of Him.



2. Revealing the True Nature of God

It's easy to get the wrong idea, like thinking God can't be trusted or that He's just waiting to punish us. But Jesus came to set the record straight. He's like God's selfie, showing us exactly what God is like in human form.

"Jesus said to him, 'Have I been so long with you, and yet you have not come to know Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; how can you say, 'Show us the Father?'" - John 14:9 NASB

3. God is closer than we imagine

We're not alone; He's always with us, guiding us, and loving us no matter what.

"and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." - Matthew 28:20 NASB

We walk through life with Jesus, accompanied by the Father and Spirit. We've got a tribe, we're safe, we belong, and we know where we're going.

4. God is Three-In-One

"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit." - Matthew 28:19 NASB

His wonderful, complex, relational love is indestructible. He offers us this love to be experienced here, now, and in eternity. God's loving creative power overflowed in creating us. Now, we get to participate in divine love.

Conclusion: Embracing Healing and Transformation

So, let's invite God to heal and shape our view of Him. When we see God as the loving, compassionate, powerful friend that He is, it changes everything. We're not alone and we're not vulnerable; He's always with us, guiding us, strengthening us and loving us no matter what.

Let's journey together as a church in discovery and healing. Let's explore the depths of our faith and deepen our relationship with the divine.

Your brother, Malcolm

For Reflection

Contemplate this sculpture of the prodigal's reunion with his father (Luke 15). What do you notice? What does this picture show us about Father God's heart and how he feels about us?

Charity Status Update

A huge 'thank you' to everybody who gave us feedback on the statement of faith, objects of the charity and appointment of trustees. Very special thanks to those of you who waded through the details of the longer forms. Not exactly inspiring reading, but important material! We have made some adjustments to the documents and Bronwen has submitted them to the Charities commission. We will keep you updated on progress.

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>