

An introduction to our Lent series

‘Jesus loves you to bits!’

In the weeks leading up to Easter, in the sermons on Sundays and in the homegroup notes which accompany them, we are going to be focussing on the heart of Jesus. To help us do this, we will be using a book published last March entitled *Gentle and Lowly – the Heart of Christ for Sinners and Sufferers* by Dane Ortlund (Crossway, 2020).

This book has had an amazing reception. Reviewers have said things like

‘This delightful book opens up the sheer immensity of Jesus’ tender love for us ... Your soul needs this book.’

‘Read this book and you will be refreshed to understand God’s grace in a whole new way.’

‘This book is an invitation to experience the sweet consolation of a Saviour who moves towards us with tenderness and grace.’

‘My life has been transformed by the beautiful, staggering truths in this book ... Jesus is one who delights in showing mercy. For any feeling bruised, weary, or empty, this is the balm for you’.

‘The chapters are short and pithy, with a frequent turn of phrase that makes you re-read a sentence for the sheer beauty of the truth revealed’.

Dane Ortlund is senior pastor of Naperville Presbyterian Church in Naperville, Illinois. He lives in Naperville with his wife, Stacey, and their five children. We have contacted him and he has sent us a message.

Message from Dane Ortlund:

***The Lord bless you at St Mary's as you wade into the book!
Blessings upon you from God himself, sisters and brothers.***

The book is about the HEART of Jesus. ‘Who is he? Who is he *really*? What is most natural to him?’ When Jesus moves towards sinners and sufferers, what flows out of him most freely and instinctively? What does he *feel* about us?

Do you ever think that Christ is often sometimes slightly fed up with you? That he’s more grumpy than glad when he thinks of you? This book and our Lent course aim to help us to experience Jesus as he really is and discover what makes his heart beat faster when he looks at us. We pray we will see the glory of Jesus’ heart for our up-and-down lives.

The book contains 23 crisp short chapters of about 8 pages each, each studying Jesus from a different angle, a bit like exploring different facets of a diamond. At its core, the book shows us that Jesus’ heart is most fundamentally a tender, open, welcoming, understanding heart – a heart that rejoices to love his people even more than they rejoice to receive his love.

Over the six Sundays of Lent, starting on 21st February, we will look at Jesus with the help of this book:

Jesus – the man with a heart

Jesus – the man of sympathy

Jesus – the man of compassion

Jesus – the man of joy

Jesus – the man of sorrow

Jesus – the Son of the Father

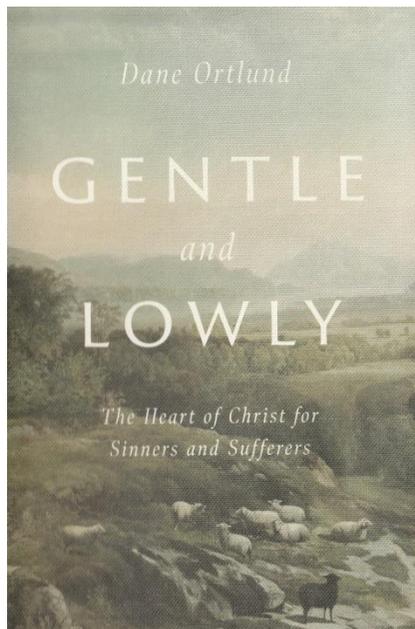
Let’s pray that these Sundays will give us a fresh experience of Jesus as he really is and that we will gain a new knowledge of Jesus’ heart.

A quote from the book to whet your appetite:

“For those united to him, the heart of Jesus is not a rental; it is your new permanent residence. You are not a tenant; you are a child. His heart is not a ticking time bomb; his heart is the green pastures and still waters of endless reassurances of his presence and comfort, whatever our present spiritual accomplishments. It is who he is.” (p.66)

The notes for each week are accompanied by some discussion questions for homegroups to use. Leaders may use these or adapt them or devise their own questions according to what will best help their group. It would be helpful if the notes as well as the questions could be made available for home group members. In the notes, the page references (after a quote) come from the book itself.

If you would like to buy the book, we can get a substantial discount by buying a number of copies: £8.99 instead of the RRP £15.99. Paul Woodbridge will order a copy for anyone who requests one.



To order your copy for £8.99, email

pwoodbridge65@gmail.com