

temptation, and put to death whatever belongs to the sinful nature. I'm not arguing against putting sin to death. I am arguing, rather, against this vague, non-directed sense of God's general displeasure and disappointment with most of us most of the time. I notice this in pastoral ministry a lot. Many Christians have a version of God in their heads as a constantly disappointed figure, always upset we're not doing more. When you ask if there's something in particular, the answer is no. Almost always, what they are talking about is a low-key, ill-defined sense that they are "not praying enough" or "not reading their Bible enough" or "not involved enough at church". On account of this God is, they are sure, disappointed with them.

Permission to speak frankly? What kind of God is that?! We're ascribing to God the worst forms of passive-aggressive behaviour. A God that is upset with us, but refuses to tell us why, or specifically over what? He's disappointed, but for a bunch of stuff we can't really put our finger on. And, despite our pleading, he's not prepared to disclose to us what it is?

Paul says "the acts of the sinful nature are *obvious*: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft" and so on (Gal 5:19–21, emphasis added). God is not a fault-finder (Jas 1:5). If you're worried about it, pray and ask God to search you and find any hidden sin (Ps 139:24). Then, once you've prayed that prayer, trust that God will answer it, and then get on with things. If there is something, you can trust him to let you know.

Psalms 103:14 says that God "knows how we are formed, he remembers that we are but dust." God didn't make us finite creatures and then decide to grade us against the expectations of infinite divinity. There's good news here. You're allowed to get tired. It's not a sin to run out of energy, or to not be good at everything, or to fail to be in two places at once. Save all your guilt and repentance for actual sin—don't waste it on things that are just about you being a creature.

In the gospel of Jesus Christ, we meet God as our Father. Our good Father. As father myself, my basic stance toward my kids is that they're great! Am I ever disappointed with them? Well, yes, sure. But I'm not vaguely disappointed with them all the time for no reason in particular. I'm occasionally disappointed with them when they actually do something wrong that I could reasonably have expected them to do right. I communicate the disappointment, and then try and help them to move forward. And I'm an imperfect and sinful father! How much more would God, our good and perfect Father, be like that toward us?

Let me be clear: If you are aware of a serious, sinful activity in which you are currently ensconced and for which you are at present unrepentant—repent. Don't appeal to God's kindness and fatherly goodness as an excuse to continue in sin. However, if you are living in order to please God; if you are earnest in following him, disappointed when you fail him, and quick to repent, then you should proceed in life on the basis that God loves you to death, that he is genuinely delighted in you, that he cares for you, and literally couldn't love you more than he does. I honestly think this is part of what it means to walk by faith and not by sight. It's getting the message through our thick skulls and despite what our inner voice tells us: God actually loves us.



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*But since you excel in everything – in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in the love we have kindled in you – see that you also excel in this grace of giving [2 Corinthians 8.7].*

**Grace - Hands** (30<sup>th</sup> June)

Malachi 1:6-14

Psalms 111

Titus 2:11-15

Matthew 9:1-13

**Ordinary 14** (7<sup>th</sup> July)

2 Samuel 5:1-10

Psalms 48

2 Corinthians 12:2-10

**Mark 6:1-13**

**Dear Karmil, God Is Almost Certainly Not Disappointed with You**

TGCA 22/06/2024 RORY SHINER

Dear Karmil,

Thanks for your email, your encouragement, and your engagement with Sunday's sermon. For a preacher, there's nothing more encouraging than having people actually engage with the content of what you've said. In your email, you mentioned you had some hesitation about my claim that "God is not disappointed with us." You wondered if that was in fact true. Fair question. My notes say:

*Some Christians live their lives under the apprehension that God is always low-key disappointed with them. He saved us by grace, but ever since that moment, he's found our performance anything but encouraging. Can I say as clearly as I can: That. Is. Not. True. Where did you get that idea from? Which Bible verse led you to that impression? Which part of the gospel has caused you to believe God, who saved when you were his enemy and Jesus was dead, is now frankly underwhelmed and annoyed at the piece of work you've turned out to be? When he saved you he knew what he was signing up for. He saved us at our worst—when we were God's enemies (Rom 5:6–8). What are the chances that, now we are God's friends, he is regretting the decision? Let me say with all the gospel-authority I can muster: God is not disappointed with you.*

In your email you rightly point out that if God is holy, and if we continue to struggle with sin, then in some sense he must be disappointed in us. I got the sense you were worried that we might lose sight of his holiness and the need to keep fighting the sinful nature. Some thoughts and clarifications that might help.

Yes, it is possible for people in Christ to displease God. We're on the same page here. We should broker no peace treaty with sin. We are to walk in the light, flee

## A guide for our prayers during the week

### Monday

Our diocese and the gospel

- Bishop Peter
- Other parishes
- Dean for Cathedral – Rev. Ross Nicholson

### Tuesday

Our church and the gospel

- Children and youth
- Families
- Seniors
- Chris

### Wednesday

Our community and the gospel

- St Luke's Op Shop
- Blackwater
- Emerald Churches

### Thursday

Our nation and the gospel

- Prime minister
- State and local government
- Religious Freedom legislation

### Friday

God's world and the gospel

- Islamisation
- War and poverty
- Persecuted Church
- CMS and ABM

### Saturday

Ministry and the gospel

- Bible Studies
- Food for Body and Soul
- Wardens and Parish Council

## Dates to Remember

Today	Food for Body & Soul at 5.30 pm
10 July	CWCI, Coffee & Nibbles evening, contact Dawn 0400 706 286
13 July	Working Bee
20 July	Garage sale
27 July	Barra Fishing Day Lay Ministers Retreat - Rockhampton

### Service Leader

### Read

### Prayers

### Shop

### Grounds

### 30 June

Russell

Natalie, Donna

Russell

Wayne, Kayleen

### 7 July

Larry

Nancy

Dianne

Dianne, Donna

## The BCA Prayer

Lord our God, help us to remember those who live in isolated and remote parts of our land. We ask you to strengthen and encourage all whose ministries are supported by The Bush Church Aid Society.

Refresh them in times of discouragement and loneliness and call others to stand with them in the task of making Christ known.

Grant that, through the ministry of the Word and Sacraments, through caring service and by support for young people, the message of your redeeming love may be proclaimed and accepted by the people of our land. We ask these things through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

### Direct Debit Giving Information

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