

A black and white photograph of an adult hand holding a baby's foot. The adult's hand is positioned at the top, with fingers gently gripping the baby's foot. The baby's foot is in the center, with its toes pointing towards the bottom left. The background is dark, making the hands stand out.

Inspiration

June 2016

*Children are a
gift from the
Lord; they are a
reward from him.*

Psalms 127:3

The Official Magazine of Grace Church Blackburn

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**GRACE
CHURCH**
"KNOWING JESUS & MAKING HIM KNOWN"

Welcome to this issue of "Inspiration" our monthly church magazine, designed to keep you informed of all that's going on here at Grace.

Spring has sprung and we celebrate this month the newness of life.

If your reading this article on the first Sunday of June then you are aware that today we have had the dedication service for Baby Christopher. Born in 2015, this young man is the first child to be born into our church fellowship; his parents were the first couple that I married within the church, (although another couple married when I first arrived); and his mum was part of the first baptism I conducted here as the Pastor. It seems to me to be very fitting that Christopher is also my first dedication, not only here at Grace, but at any time. (Sorry if I cocked it up!!!).



I love firsts, like the first beach day of the year, first time you get to wear shorts and of course the first Mr whippy ice cream when your officially on holiday. I love firsts so much because the name tells me they aren't lasts, but the first of many.

Since Vicky and Calvin's wedding, we have had the privilege of holding more, I look forward to many more. Since the baptismal service we haven't had another, but I'm pleased to announce we will be having one on the 26th June. And this dedication will be the first of many.

You see spring has sprung, and the deadness of winter, were the new growth lay dormant, untapped, unused and hibernating, has gone. Now new life is in its stead, and nothing can stop the power of life breaking out. I know this from the pathetic attempts to keep weeds out of my pathways.

I wonder if you are ready in your life for a new season. Maybe your desperate for a season of hope because you have gone through some very difficult and tragic circumstances. Maybe you're ready for a new season because your current one has seen you fail at being the person you want to be and you are racked with guilt that only a new start will rectify.

I think at one time or another we have all had the desire for a new season. But the problem with starting again; be it moving some-

where new, getting a new job, starting slimming world, entering rehab or even finding a new partner, is that sooner or later you're ready for another new season. Not that we ever start our changes in life like that. We always tell ourselves that this time it will be different and this time we will get it right. Of course that can be the problem. Whenever I play computer games I find myself constantly restarting the game because it hasn't gone perfectly well. But life never works like that, and no matter how many times we tell ourselves, this time I will get it right, we are forgetting that life goes on, the credits of the film haven't rolled up, and tomorrow always seems to throw us a problem.

I once knew a man who tried to stop smoking. He went through the NHS quit line, using all the correct patches, gum and procedures. he did really well and managed to stop, until he had a stressful day at work, and then he needed to lean upon his cigarettes, because that's how he coped with stress. Then the stress was gone, he went back to the NHS quit line and did really well, until his job became stressful again. Just because you have the will for a new start, doesn't mean you are going to get rid of your old problems.

Here at Grace we are celebrating the Newness of life because in our little assembly we are seeing it in our very own lives, and its exciting. For some time, the building, the church meetings and our attendance had dwindled and become dry and stale. But some did not settle for this and amongst that barren winter period, they prayed, they met, they

studied the bible together and they listened for the Lord's promise. They did this continually until they realised that together they didn't just know of God, they knew God and they knew Him as Jehovah, and they knew Him as Jesus. His mercy became real to them, tangible and something they could apply to their own lives. His love unlocked the dry barren places of their hearts. Until one day, Spring sprung and they didn't realise it but the newness of a life in Jesus rose from the dry place they had once known. A new season had begun. In fact, to be precise, a new season has begun. A water shed moment.

But what made it a water shed moment? Well they made a choice to believe that not only is Jesus real, but their lives needed to reflect this. And that wasn't a decision to live holier than thou. It was a decision that if they believed Jesus saved them from their sins, which separated them from God; and if they believed that by rejecting Jesus free gift to pay the price for their sins, then they condemned themselves to eternity in hell. But by accepting that free Gift they were now set free from the cost of sin but most importantly they were given the right to draw in to the holy presence of Jesus. Then they realised they had to do what Jesus taught us and 'seek first the kingdom of Heaven'. Or in other words, they felt that they no longer should live for themselves and their own personal enjoyment and they should live for what the Lord wanted them to do.

How did they make this choice? Well in various ways and in various stages. But on the last Sunday of May they

chose to make a monumentus decision, they decided to burn their bridges. And by deciding to burn their bridges then it meant they had no way of going back to the old season. You might wonder why they would want to go back to their old season if it was so bad. The truth is, when things get hard we always revert back to what we knew as a way of comfort, just like our smoker!

So how did they burn their bridges? Well we chose to make a decision which meant we had to continue to tell people about the salvation of God through Jesus Christ, and that meant we had to continue to grow in getting to know Jesus personally. We did it by making a financial decision to raise a mortgage, which we as people who are members of the church would pay by giving a little more, than we would normally to the running of the church. To be precise we needed the church attendees to commit to giving an extra £500 a month for the next 20 years. And when we counted up what people agreed to give the number came to £540 a month.

Now you may be thinking "I don't get how that's burning your bridges". Well the answer to that is because, who says any of us have 20 years left. In fact, who says any of us have tomorrow. And if we don't give the bank their £500 a month for the next 20 years then any person whose failed to pay their mortgage knows what comes next. And the only way we can continue to give that money is if those who have pledged continue to keep giving, or others take their place. And so by faith, we make

a decision. Not a decision that God won't let us fail and He will pay it if we can't. But a decision that we will keep preaching the gospel, and leading people to accept Christ Jesus as Saviour, so that there is always a church. One that is growing and is continually joined by new people.

The alternative is to be a merry bunch who enjoy each other's company, keep ourselves to ourselves and slowly one by one die off until only a handful are left.

What this church has decided to do is to choose a new season, and to make sure we can't go back to being selfish and insular. The gospel preached has to be our only hope now, and it is the way forward.

That may all seem a bit crazy to you and not be the way you want a new season in your life to begin, or to continue. However, let me assure you unless it does, you will constantly need new seasons.

One day in the heat of the Middle East a woman of a certain reputation came to get water from the well, a task she would have to constantly repeat. The Lord broke with convention, eastern tradition and His nations own Xenophobia, to talk to this woman. He pointed out to her that the task she was trying to do was an endless one and He had the only viable alternative. He said to the woman if you ask of me I will give you water which when you drink it you will never thirst again. The Lord wasn't referring to magic water. Jesus was talking about the gift of God that He had come to the earth to provide, Salva-

tion and with it a new start. Christians call it being born again, and Jesus told Nicodemus, that if you want to see the Kingdom of Heaven then you must be born again. It requires us to die to an old life and to live to a new life which makes Jesus as Lord, His will for us, as directed by the bible, as the most important, and a willingness to allow the Lord to change our Character to be a bit more like His every day.

The woman asked Jesus for this water, I wonder if reading this today you too really need to start a new season that will never end, and never need restarting. Well in response to her desire Jesus does something you may not like. What the Lord does is He points out exactly why it is she needs the new start. 'Go get your Husband, the Lord asks. 'But I have no husband' the woman replies. The Lord knew this, He knew that this woman had instead had several sexual partners, and was in a liaison as they spoke. The Lord didn't do it to offend, but did it to show us the way. Because if you want the new season, then you need to be honest with the Lord and confess your failings before Him.

Only the good go to heaven is something we would all agree upon. But whose standard of good is it? We can all find someone that we are better than. So it's not who we think are good that go to heaven. Because the good to get into God's heaven should be defined by God. And His definition of good is found in the law of God, such as things like the ten commandments. rules such as don't tell lies, don't steal, don't commit adultery, a sin which Jesus

told the Jews you can commit even if you look upon another with Lust. they aren't graded, and the circumstances or reasons for breaking them are not mitigating. Have you ever lied? Have you ever stolen? Have you ever looked upon another with lust? Then are you good?

'Only the good go to heaven is something we would all agree upon, but whose standard of good is it?'

But here is the amazing thing which Jesus has done. Because those rules tell us why we aren't good, but even if you kept them, it wouldn't have got you into heaven. There is only one way to get into heaven.

"if you confess the Lord Jesus, and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved." Romans 10:9

By faith accepting that only Jesus can take away the cost of your sin, and then making Him Lord of your life. This is free, yet will have a giant impact on your life. But then that's what we are going for, a new season, a season that will never end.

What does it require of you? Well like the church your looking to go from an old way of being, a winter existence, and to move into a new way, a Christ first way.

I wonder if you're interested in a new season in your life.

Today you can have the promise of eternal life, the choice is yours and it's only a prayer away.

As always I pray for a blessing on those who seek the face of the Lord.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'A. W. Tozer', with a stylized, flowing script.

I would once again like to thank all of the contributors to this month's issue and a special thanks to Vicky for her time and effort putting it together. Let me encourage you if you do have a poem, a testimony or a short message you would like to share then you can come and see me or email it to pastorgracechurchblackburn@hotmail.co.uk

Our Bible reading should not be a marathon, but a slow, deliberate soaking in of its message.

~ A. W. Tozer

BAPTISM

26TH JUNE 2016

10:30AM

Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.

And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Matthew 28:18-20

written by carol duxbury

Do you love me? Feed my sheep. John 21 v 17

With the week long festival of unleavened bread now past, the disciples have left Jerusalem and have returned to Galilee. The sons of Zebedee, James and John, were fishing with Simon Peter just like they used to before being called by the Lord. Luke 5 v 10. They would fish by night, so as to sell their catch fresh, each morning....But, this time, we are told they caught nothing v 3.

This will be the third time that Jesus has shown Himself to His disciples since He was raised from the dead v14.

Simon Peter has just announced that he is going fishing, and the others, Thomas, (called the twin), Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and we are simply told, two other of His disciples (v1), agree to go with him. V3 tells us that on this particular outing, "They caught nothing" As Jesus spoke to the 7 from the shore we are told, saying "Children, do you have any fish?" but "they didn't know it was Jesus" at this point. "Cast your net on the right side" The Lord told them, and sure enough 153 large fishes were in their net, and, the net was unbroken. It was then that, John realized that it was the Lord v7 and Peter threw himself into the sea in shame. Yet, later on the shore, by the campfire, where fish would by now, be cooking for breakfast we're told that, no-one dare ask Him who He is, although, "they knew it was the Lord" v12.

What a privilege!!! To have walked and talked with the Saviour face to face. Woweeeee. The closest we can come anywhere near to that, in the flesh as it were, is to "Entertain angels unaware" Hebrews 13 v2

Peter's Restoration

Next, we read of the restoration of Peter. God is always ready to restore and reconcile. Joel 2v25 assures us of that, saying "I will restore to you the years that the swarming locust has eaten", "I will heal their backslidings and love them freely" Hos 14v4, showing us that God is always pleased to bring blessings to those who truly repent. This of course does not mean that sin leaves no scars, but that God can restore people to usefulness in spite of past disobedience.

Peter had denied the Lord during His trial and crucifixion 3 times. 3 times when he was asked if he was one of Jesus' disciples, to which

he replied: "I am not". Now, Jesus asked Peter 3 times to reaffirm his love for Him.

When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?" He said to Him "Yes Lord; you know that I love you " Jesus said to him, "Feed my lambs". Then He said to him a second time, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord: you know that I love you, He said to him, "Tend my sheep". Here He says to him a third time "Simon son of John, do you love me?" and he said to Him "Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Feed my sheep?"

Do you love me? Feed my sheep. Peter had denied the Lord 3 times and here he has affirmed his love, for Him a third time. No doubt he was a little upset and taken aback by being asked 3 times.

I wonder,.. is that sometimes how we feel? When we, kick against the pricks as it were. are we, taken aback, hurt, or upset perhaps when we are challenged, sometimes repeatedly? Are we convicted time and again by the Lord or by His Spirit through His Word? How do we react? Ought we,..... to be asked numerous times? Must He always repeat Himself?.

For those of us who, and no doubt that is everyone here, at one time or another have dealt, in any way with children, know, how positively irritating it is to have to ask again and again like little sir echo!!! We read early on in Genesis that God's Spirit "shall not always strive with man" A

sobering thought.

If the Lord spoke to you and to me, He's saying ".....do you love me? Feed my sheep" How do we respond? What do we think He meant? Would we respond like young Samuel perhaps, "Here I am Lord ". Scared and inexperienced, yet ready and willing for God to make Him able! All he needed to show the Lord was a willing and eager heart. Or, do we listen to those whispers and the thoughts in our heads that say, it doesn't mean me! It must be for someone else. I can't do that! Not me I've done enough!!!!!!.

The verse we chose as our motto, if you will when Cogs became Oasis is found in Psalm 92 and verse 14, but for this purpose we'll begin at 12, "But the Godly will flourish like palm trees and grow strong like cedars of Lebanon. For they are transplanted to the Lord's own house.. They flourish in the courts of our God, Even in old age they shall still produce fruit. They will remain vital and green". These trees of righteousness, they don't grow willy nilly, they are planted, not just anywhere, but in the house of the Lord, in paradiscal type soil.....

Now, we know that trees don't grow in the house, I think it's right to say its typology, cos God's trees are of His Grace, you and me, fed, watered, and kept alive by the sap, as it were from His Word and His Holy Spirit. So are we planted thus just to grow big and strong? I think not..... I think we are Nourished to Flourish.

Nourished in the courts of our God to spread our branches, so that they

hang over the wall. Genesis 49 v 22. It is the privilege, as well as the duty of the righteous not only to grow but to abound. We're not just commanded to flourish, but we are promised too, that starting at any age, yes even old age like Moses we will flourish. Present our bodies as a living sacrifice until the Lord comes and takes us to Glory. Hallelujah.

Natural trees stop bearing fruit when they get old, but those who grow in God's strength and by His Grace do not fail along with nature. The latter days of the saints are sometimes their best, and their last works often their best. I think of David Hathaway for example still a missionary, still travelling the world telling all who listen of Jesus at age 82, and Keith Monument, a positive joy to see and hear preaching.

We must never give up.....never give in, never listen to anything or anyone who would write us off, including ourselves!!!!!! All that ever put their trust in God have found Him to be Faithful and all Sufficient.

There are souls all around us going to a Christless eternity if someone doesn't tell them, and it's not up to someone else to do it, it's up to each and every believer from 0-99 or 0 to eternity.

Young Samuel couldn't do it either, he was nought but a lad. But he was willing and ready and eager to be obedient to Almighty God, and look how he turned out..

Do you love me? Feed my sheep!

A peek at reality.

It's not my job

This is a story of 4 people named ANYBODY, EVERYBODY, SOMEBODY, and NODODY. There was an important job to be done and EVERYBODY was sure the SOMEBODY would do it. ANYBODY could have done it, but NOBODY did it. SOMEBODY got angry about that, because it was EVERYBODY'S job. EVERYBODY thought ANYBODY could do it, but NOBODY realised that EVERYBODY wouldn't do it. It ended up that EVERYBODY blamed SOMEBODY when NOBODY did what ANYBODY could have done!!!!!!

The Lord asks each of us again today, Do you love me? Feed my sheep!!



FOOD THOUGHT

for

HOSTED BY OASIS

FEED YOUR BODY & SOUL

Tuesday 21st June 2016
11:30am

JOIN US FOR OUR 'FOOD FOR THOUGHT'
GOSPEL OUTREACH FOR THOSE AGED 55 &
OVER!

MENU

Sausage, Mash &
Onion Gravy

Apple Pie & Ice
Cream

Tea or coffee

Grace Church
Wensley Road
Blackburn
BB2 1QD

TEL: 01254 54541

written by christine morris

You can run but you can't hide – Ezekiel Chapters 6 & 7

No one wants to take the blame anymore. Insurance soars cos things aren't just an 'accident' anymore. We all like to blame someone....as long as it is not ourselves. As we look around, we could say that crime isn't punished. People commit atrocities and get a couple of years in prison, people get away with murder....or so we say! Psalm 73 speaks of injustice...especially verse 12. Have we become complacent or believe that it will always be this way. Perhaps it explains why some don't believe in hell anymore. If we don't believe there are consequences to our actions then we can change the truth.

But judgement is coming!

Sin, wrong doing, can't just disappear. Sin must be judged and for the nation of Israel that judgement is inevitable. Verse 2 and 3 of chapter 6 find Ezekiel speaking to the mountains. Not only was God judging Jerusalem but the whole nation. For the Jews, the mountains of Israel, was like God's home territory. God refers to them as 'My mountains', it was as if the children of Israel were bringing sin right to God's doorstep. Not only on the mountains, but in the hills, in little spots, were high place of worship...altars and platforms to foreign gods...Baal and Asherah.

1 Kings 3 v 2 tells us that people worshipped in the high places because the temple wasn't yet built, but once the temple was built God told them in Deuteronomy 12, the temple was to be the centre place of worship.

'Sin, wrong doing, can't just disappear. Sin must be judged and for the nation of Israel that judgement is inevitable.'

Old habits die hard, especially when they are more convenient to ourselves. Even though they were told to worship at the temple it was more convenient to worship on the high places; Jeremiah 3:6-9. In Deuteronomy chapter 7 verse 5 they were told to destroy the altars and pillars when they conquered the land. Asherah and Baal were once more erected on the hills and once again pagan religion began to infiltrate into God's Judaism. Even those minis-

tering at the high places in King Josiah's day were not just pagan priests but priests of Jehovah who were standing worshipping to other gods. Israel's distinctiveness as the people of God, as shining lights among the nations and as having the only way to God, was being diluted.

The kings of the books of Chronicles and Kings failed to wipe out the old religion of Baal worship. God kept telling them to knock down the altars but they failed to do it. Hezekiah and Josiah are the only two kings to attempt it.

Today it doesn't seem to matter what truth is. What Ezekiel was saying here was linked to Paul in Acts chapter 17 'Then Paul stood in the midst of the Areopagus and said, "Men of Athens, I perceive that in all things you are very religious; for as I was passing through and considering the objects of your worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Therefore, the One whom you worship without knowing, Him I proclaim to you: "God, who made the world and everything in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands...."

Clapping and stamping, as the ritualistic dance the people would perform when paying homage and bringing sacrifices to their gods. They would come and dance and sing around it. God was telling Ezekiel to dance, but a dance of death. God was going to do what every king had failed to do. To show that He is Lord!

IT'S A BIG THING TO MISREPRESENT

THE CHARACTER OF GOD! Sometimes God is presented as a powerless weak grandfather who is just a God of love. That is the reason for the judgement here. We don't need to make the word of God relevant....it is relevant!

It all seems doom and gloom, but there is a glimmer of hope, a remnant. They will remember God. They will be convicted of their sin. But this is the future; it's not going to happen now. It was going to take time to germinate in their hearts but they will come to a realisation of what they have done in their hearts. There will always be some faithful. But there are 3 judgements coming their way: sword – war, famine – hunger, plague – disease. This list can be found in Leviticus 26 as the punishment for breaking the covenant made with Abraham. Not only that, but the list can be found in Revelation 6 – the four horseman.

Ezekiel's message wasn't repent for the time is nigh, it was 'it is too late, the end is here'. Over and over again – the end is come is repeated. God is angry with His covenant people. God's patience has run out with His people. The rod in verse 10 of chapter 7 speaks of Babylon – Nebuchadnezzar – who God is using to discipline His people (Isaiah 10:5). It's the prediction of the final destruction of the temple that will come in 586BC – the third deportation to Babylon.

Their idols, their silver and gold – material possessions would mean nothing to them- they wouldn't satisfy them any longer. God would allow Gentiles to walk into the holy of holies

and defile it.

God told Ezekiel to put chains on his arms to show the people that He was going to chain them because they have chained themselves to sin. Any nation that rejects the knowledge of God, will lose its moral fibre, it has no means of support or protection when it falls into trouble. God isn't even protecting them.

So what can we learn from this: there is a day of judgement coming so

1. We should be persuading men to turn to God – Jude v14-15

2. We are to cry out to a dying world, run from the wrath to come – Ezekiel 3:18

3. We are to guard ourselves from idols – 1 John 5:21

God gives us a choice, heaven or hell, reward or loss. We get to choose who we serve! As a child of God will we choose to go on empty handed? Next time.....the second vision.



**SUPPOSE YOU
COULD GAIN
EVERYTHING IN
THE WHOLE
WORLD, AND
LOST YOUR SOUL.
WAS IT WORTH IT?**

BILLY GRAHAM

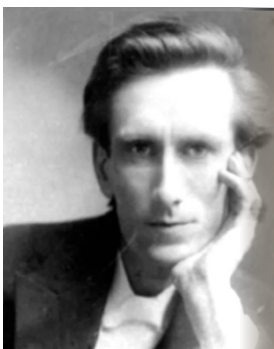
monthly devotional - oswald chambers

Vision and Darkness

Whenever God gives a vision to a Christian, it is as if He puts him in "the shadow of His hand" (Isaiah 49:2). The saint's duty is to be still and listen. There is a "darkness" that comes from too much light - that is the time to listen. The story of Abram and Hagar in Genesis 16 is an excellent example of listening to so-called good advice during a time of darkness, rather than waiting for God to send the light. When God gives you a vision and darkness follows, wait. God will bring the vision He has given you to reality in your life if you will wait on His timing. Never try to help God fulfill His word. Abram went through thirteen years of silence, but in those years all of his self-sufficiency was destroyed. He grew past the point of relying on his own common sense. Those year of silence were a time of discipline, not a period of God's displeasure. There is never any need to pretend that your life is filled with joy and confidence; just wait upon the God and be grounded in Him (see Isaiah 50:10-11).

Do I trust at all in the flesh? Or have I learned to go beyond all confidence in myself and other people of God? Do I trust in books and prayer or other joys in my life? Or have I placed my confidence in God Himself, not in His blessings? "I am Almighty God..." - El Shaddai, the Allpowerful God (Genesis 17:1). The reason we are all being disciplined is that we will know God is real. As soon as God becomes real to us, people pale by comparison, becoming shadows of reality. Nothing that other saints do or say can ever upset the one who is built on God.

O Lord, with much dimness I draw nigh to You. Clear the dimness away from me and flood me with the light of Your countenance.



Now when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and behold, horror and great darkness fell upon him.

Genesis 15:12

CALLING ALL SUPERHEROES!



HOLIDAY CLUB
15TH - 19TH AUGUST
10AM - 12PM

**WE NEED
YOUR
HELP!**



Can you help scene
setting and prop
making?
8th to 13th
August



Can you be a
helping hand
during the holiday
club week?

**PLEASE SIGN UP USING THE NOTICE BOARD
IN THE MINOR HALL!**

HOW TO STUDY THE BIBLE

A frank discussion on how to get the most out of studying your Bible.

Thursday 30th June
7pm - 9pm

Subjects covered:

1. How to approach the Bible.
2. How to use a commentary.
3. What is a 'cross reference'?
4. Using concordances, Bible dictionaries and Bible encyclopedias.
5. Why do it at all?



GRACE
CHURCH
WORKSHOPS

written by david lambert

Thanks again, everyone for all your continued support for Missions in 2016. Please pray for and support our mission meetings during 2016. We have two possible visits remaining before the end of July and our year of sowing.

The next visit in the Grace diary will be from Sasha and Sara (AOG Serbia) on Sunday July 10th at 6pm. I realise that some of you may not be aware that Sara is a former member of the church and has been in Serbia for some time working as a missionary there. Sara had an initial call to this area in the early 1990's and, after meeting Sasha at bible school, has served the Lord there ever since sometimes in difficult circumstances. Please ask me if you would like any further information. Their last visit to Grace was in July 2014 so we are looking forward to a challenging update having supported their ministry in prayer and finance since 1999.

Please pray that we will have a challenging and suitable contact for the remaining visit for this church year planned to take place before the end of August.

We have a visit from Ian and Sarah Hodgeson and their girls on Sunday August 07th at 10.30am they are on their first furlong from Cambodia you will remember their visit to us on 1/06/14 when they were preparing to leave the UK. It will be interesting and a challenge to hear how they are progressing with language development in the difficult Khmer dialect and how God has provided for all their many outgoings and needs. They have fond and warm memories of us from the last visit so and I know you will make them equally welcome this time. I receive regular mailings from them and always include them in the half year giving so the church has already supported their work and prayerfully sown into Cambodia ministries via the mission's prayer meeting and your personal prayers. If you are interested in a pre-visit info update don't hesitate to ask.

The third date in the diary will be Martin Dudgeon's visit on Sunday evening October 30th 6pm with an insight into a specific Asian missions perspective.

There has been a long term vision to reach and teach the Chinese which was often inspired by the calling of James Hudson Taylor and the Cambridge seven and yet few agencies or individuals have felt a call to work amongst the 11 million Uyghur people, a

Muslim people group from the province of Xinjiang.

So difficult is Christian evangelism and work amongst this particular group that it has been long considered almost impossible. Only a precious few missionaries have felt a calling to them. However, there has been a revival recently with reports that several hundred Uyghur people have made a stand for Christ in their communities. This has been considered a minor miracle a real work of the spirit; everything is possible as God moves and ordains. Translation work of the bible into the distinct Uyghur dialect began in 1990 and the New Testament was completed in 2005. It shows the value of continuous sowing through pray and giving and the faithfulness of a few. God always gives honour to our faithful and steady commitment to Him especially when we most doubt that He will act this is the essence of faith. Revivals in the UK and worldwide have always been started when a few individuals decided to "get real" with God and weep and cry out for souls. They did not settle for the Status Quo or worse still stale traditional, repetitive or poorly motivated powerless habits but simple came to the throne in humility and brokenness. Can you or I be similarly challenged? Are we really real? Everyday you and I must ask ourselves the same searching questions of challenge until the Lord brings us to our knees in repentance; comes or calls us home.

If you would like to join our missions covenant scheme for £24 a year or £2 a month then please ask me or collect one of the forms on the mis-

sions table you can start any month. I have also continued writing letters of encouragement to every AOG missionary. AOG currently have 71 individuals on the field most of whom are in couples. If you want to join in you only need to write, or at the very least pray for a minute, a short letter of encouragement and I will post to the missionary along with mine. It shouldn't take more than ten minutes you will be blessed by doing it. If you can pen such a letter then the June deadline to pass them on is Sunday 26th This month it is, Ben and Marion Owuso Sekyere (Ghana) Kings Village, PO Box TL 2018, Tamale, Ghana. Is anyone interested in encouraging our missionaries?

I do hope, that someone will be able to add a letter to mine soon and break the ice and bless one of our missionaries. I have included the full address again this month should you feel disposed to write privately.

Perhaps I can also again encourage you to pray earnestly for the suffering church whose needs are greater now than ever before this is due to the rise of so called ISIL activism in many areas of the world. As you may have heard ISIL on the ground in Syria and Iraq is now greatly depleted. Please pray that those still involved will see dreams of Jesus as they live in the constant fear of continuous air strikes and the advance of ground forces. The next mission's prayer meeting will be on Tuesday June 7th 2016 @ 7.30pm D.V when you will have the opportunity to bring these and the many other overseas missions issues before the Lord.

GRACE CHURCH

AGM & CONFERENCE WEEK

SATURDAY 2ND - FRIDAY 8TH JULY

“A YEAR OF HIRING”

THIS YEARS DIRECTION STATEMENT IS ‘A YEAR OF HIRING’ I BELIEVE WE ARE COMING TO A SEASON OF REAPING. BUT TO WHAT EXTENT IS THAT OF USE TO US, WE ARE NOT EQUIPPED AS A CHURCH FOR HELPING PEOPLE. THEY WILL COME WITH ISSUES, PROBLEMS, AND NEEDS. THE UNSAVED, BECOMING NEWLY SAVED WILL NEED DISCIPLESHIP, FELLOWSHIP AND ENCOURAGEMENT. WE ARE DEFICIENT IN NEARLY EVERY AREA OF BEING ABLE TO COPE WITH THE UNSAVED, OR WITH MANAGING THE CHURCH WITH ANY KIND OF GROWTH.

I BELIEVE WE ARE TO SPEND A YEAR PRAYING, SEEKING AND EQUIPPING PEOPLE INTO FILLING THE ROLES NEEDED FOR US TO MOVE FORWARD AS A BODY.

WE HAVE SEEN WITHOUT A DOUBT THAT NO ONE, AT ALL SHOULD BE WITHOUT LABOUR IN THE CHURCH, IT MEANS THAT ANYONE WHO IS, IS

LAZY, AND WE ARE NOT TO LET SUCH ONES EAT. THIS YEAR WILL BE A PUSH INTO WORK, FOR THOSE WHO ARE STILL WITHOUT LABOUR.

AS SUCH THE WORKSHOPS THAT WE WILL HAVE WILL BE TO GIVE PEOPLE A CHANCE TO SEE HOW THEY MAY FIND A WAY IN.

SATURDAY 2ND JULY

1PM TO 5PM - CHURCH FELLOWSHIP & BBQ AT THE HOME OF ALLAN & LIZ KITTS

MONDAY 4TH JULY

7PM - AGM & MISSIONS (INCLUDING MEMBERS VOTE ON NAME CHANGE)

TUESDAY 5TH JULY

7:30PM - WORKSHOP - INTRODUCTION TO BEING A DEACON AT GRACE

WEDNESDAY 6TH JULY

7:30PM - WORKSHOP - INTRODUCTION TO BEING AN ACTIVITY LEADER AT GRACE

THURSDAY 7TH JULY

7:30PM - WORKSHOP - INTRODUCTION TO BEING AN ACTIVITY HELPER AT GRACE

FRIDAY 8TH JULY

7PM - PASTORS REPORT & DIRECTION STATEMENT

ADDRESS: WENSLEY ROAD, BLACKBURN, BB2 1QD

TEL: 01254 54541 WEB: WWW.GRACECCBLACKBURN.CO.UK

written by david lambert

Summary

Alan Benson a missionary from our own church here in Blackburn has been arrested by a group of Japanese invading soldiers and is about to be charged and then tortured. He is accused of being a spy this true story is set in China during the early part of the Second World War. Alan begins to endure a period of painful and vindictive torture during which his faith in the Lord is his sustaining strength. Alan is charged as a spy and the torture is continued and enhanced in more deeper and more painful ways but Alan sticks to his guns despite the pressure being brought to bear on him by his cruel captors. Despite sustained and diverse affliction over a defined period Alan holds fast and declares this faith and urges his cruel captors to repent and be saved. "God cannot help you!" was the Japanese assertion however, our missionary maintains his steadfast stand for Christ throughout. Alan is now subjected to the dreadful and humiliating water torture designed as another painful method of extracting a confession; this continued for a number of days. Rather than become weaker he gains strength and forbearance as he calls upon the Lord despite being at his lowest ebb.

He resists putting his associates in danger and his daily portion of prayer and God's grace suffices allowing him to endure the very worst of conditions. Amazingly, the Japanese request prayer but it only serves as an opportunity to further humiliate our missionary. The true testimony of this experience is that Alan finds the Lord to be a true source of strength in that he is able to endure and triumph over the adversity before him.

Subtle familial methods are then used to try and break Alan's spirit but it was a cruel trick engineered by relentlessly wicked minds. The Japanese attempt auto suggestion as a trick. Our missionary graphically describes the conditions of his captivity and its limitations and lack of basic comforts. Bathtime proved to be an endurance test both physically and mentally once again death seemed nearby but the word of God was a joy, peace and a succour. When every single earthly thing and hope was lost he found deep joy in Jesus Christ. There was the opportunity to witness to a Chinese communist official this was mostly conducted using small strips of paper this man became a Christian and began to effectively witness such that others also became Christians. Alan ask again are you the reader a Christian have you come to Christ do you truly know him in your heart. There are now some regular, sur-

prise very short visits from Alan's wife. He is also presented with a letter that had apparently been found in the Yangtze river. It was in fact a letter from the UK that contained the word Hallelujah. (Praise the Lord). This had confused the Japanese and they were disappointed that it was something they could not hold against him and point towards him being a spy. At this point Alan is advised that he will be shot the following morning however this did not immediately take place. Although Alan completely accepted this as God's plan he was made to linger for two nights which was traumatic and stressful then the threat was lifted although he was told that he would eventually be executed but they didn't know when!

A Manchurian interpreter takes a great risk to give Alan a new reason for hope he felt like the Lord was on his side for certain. Alan is exposed to some new tricks to make him confess but he is not compromised in the least. This infuriates his captors who are desperate for a confession or they will and be accused of failure and therefore lose their honour. Five communist prisoners reject the gospel before being executed. Alan recounts a story about some aircrew to whom he witnessed to and accepted salvation who just a few hours later lost their life in a 1944 bombing raid over Germany. He urges the reader to turn to and accept Jesus Christ.

Part 19 - A Further Trial by a Military Court

I was told that I was now to have a retrial by a military court and I was

forced to make statement that I had been informed about this. I did not sleep but prayed all night because I knew that the trial would end one of two ways immediate execution or further torture. The next morning the trial began the judge was the Japanese Commander of the region. The charge was that I was a spy not a missionary and that this was just a cover for espionage. I pointed out that over seven months I had denied it and was a missionary. They had not a shred of evidence to the contrary. It turns out that the Officer who had prepared the case against me did not attend the hearing because he realised it was a complete farce. It became clear that I was totally innocent of all the charges against me. When the Commander returned he told me that I was to be released at once and then said "Goodbye" and left. At first I thought it was another trick but then they offered me a meal which I could not eat. Later I was taken to meet my wife and I knew and was overjoyed that it was all finally over and I was free to leave at last

This is not the end of the story Alan goes on work for the Lord in China and travels to South Africa and has experience of great revival

Next time:

Part 20 – My Reactions on my release

written by jamie boulton

introduction

Starting from this month we want to share with you the teaching series on the letters to the churches.

In Mathew 4 Jesus is tempted by the devil, being hungry after 40 days of fasting, the devil tells Jesus to turn the stones into bread. In reply Jesus quotes Deuteronomy 8:3 and says man shall not live by bread alone but by every Word that precedes from the mouth of the Lord. This is to be understood that food and the necessities of life may come and go but the Word of God is what will sustain you to life.

Psalm 119:105 tells us the word is a light to our feet and a lamp to our Path. This is to be understood as the whole of scripture, not just the bits we like, form the picture of the nature of the Lord and what He expects of us. Psalm 119 has the purpose of explain what the word of God is and how we should respond to it.

John 1:1 tells us in the beginning the Word was God this is in reference to the Messiahship and deity of Christ Jesus who was God and with God at the beginning. The Greek word that is used for Word is Logos which is also the same word used for the scriptures. What we learn is that the bible and Jesus have the same name and that the bible is Jesus in published form. No man has seen God at any time, Jesus told us, but if you have seen Him then you have seen the Father. However none of us have seen Jesus in the flesh but we can say we have seen Jesus through the Word. Cover to cover the Bible informs us of the nature and character of God, what He likes and dislikes and how we might get to know Him and serve Him as well as His ultimate purpose. If you want to know how the Lord loves then books like Song of Solomon give us a great and intimate detail.

From those three very small snapshots of scripture we see the importance of the Word of God to Christians. The Bible should be more important than necessary sustenance, It is our guide through the difficulty of life and it is a living book, describing in intimate detail Christ our Lord. What we may infer from all of this is that studying the Bible is not just something pleasant to do, it's more important than food, it's the keys to the life you were created to live

and it is the knowledge of Christ. As such we know that everyone of us must use and read the Bible daily and search out, labouring to understand the meaning of the text. It isn't enough to just read it, although that's a start, and you can't just pull a verse or too out when your feeling low or need an answer. All 66 books of the Bible relate to one another and explain one another. To understand one part we must look at it all and allow Scripture to interpret Scripture.

The best way to do this is to start systematically and study line upon line precept upon precept and that is how we approach Bible study at Grace Church in Blackburn. We believe that all Christians should desire to study the Word, making time to do this so that they may know Christ together. We understand that our knowledge levels are all very different as is our skill to understand because the Lord gives each of us a different measure. However any teaching from the word should be something that anyone of us could find out, even if it takes a lot of work. We also know that there are times when we get stuck or where we want to share what we have discovered in the Word and so we began a church bible study.

Grace Church in Blackburn has its bible study on a Wednesday night and a repeat on Thursday morning for those who couldn't make it. The way that we do bible studies at the church is through participation and interaction. As the Pastor I pray and wait on the Lord for the book that we will study and then we look at it together in chronological order as it was written. Going either chapter by

chapter, or with more in depth works a section of verses. Those who attend have been told of the chapter and verses and are encouraged to study it for themselves bringing notes and questions. As the Pastor I study every element of the chapter or verses in order to prepare for any question. After a short introduction to the chapter we move into the study where people ask questions and share what they have discovered. We use these discoveries and questions as jumping off points and delve deeper and deeper into the word allowing people to ask for more explanation in the harder points.

Rarely do we cover all of the possible questions and answers that each passage throws up and in truth how could we ever when no man has plummed the depths. But it is to this purpose of giving all of the potential study that has been revealed to the church that this series has been devised. Grace Church Blackburn intends to publish all of the notes of these bible studies as we work through the books of the Bible. It is our hope as a church and my hope as a pastor that these studies will be an aid to your own personal study of the word and certainly not its replacement.

These studies written for the purpose of answering questions about a particular passage and so to make them useful to yourself I would like to suggest that you follow these instructions.

- it is necessary to read the passage first and then note any of your own questions down.

- I always suggest that you turn to a commentary, including this series last. So make sure you have had a good go at understanding it yourself and seeking out the meaning. Useful tools for this are a concordance to look up words that may be in other parts of the Bible; a cross reference bible; a good Bible dictionary that may help you to understand the cultural reference of an act or how certain objects looked or were used.

- Each chapter of the book is then separated into possible questions that were anticipated. If you want to see what was taught on any particular query you can look for the question that is similar to your own. (This will hopefully make it a useful reference tool)

- Alternatively read through the chapter for a fuller understanding of the passage

- To save on space we have included the scripture references for you to read from your own bible, so you will need to have a bible handy whilst reading this book

- Test and challenge everything that you read in this book against the Word of God.

Although I have tried to be very thorough in this study it is by no means exhaustive and you can always add more and learn more. Our hope as a church is that you fall in love with the word and look to seek it out for yourself.

the study

1 Corinthians - Chapter 1 Chloe's Letter

Please read 1 Corinthians 1

So let's begin with the 1st letter to the church of Corinth by asking the question; is this the first letter to Corinth?

The answer is no. 1 Corinthians 5:9, so what does that mean to us? Well it tells us something very important, 2 Timothy 3:16 that the cannon, the 66 books are the God breathed scriptures. And yet in the letters what we find is that Paul or the other writers didn't sit down and say let's write the Bible today. They simply wrote letters

But to do what?

Look at 2 Timothy 3:16 again.

- **Doctrine** is defined as the fundamental Teaching of Scripture which is considered the bedrock of our belief and guidance for a righteous life

- **Reproof** is defined as correction for wrong actions that a church or Church member may be involved in

- Correction is defined as rectifying wrong doctrine which a church, church member or an outside influence has brought into the body.

- Instruction in righteousness is teaching the right way to live, act and behave in accordance with a good Christian testimony. That we may truly be witnesses of Jesus Christ living in each of us who have accepted Him as Saviour.

So which of these do you think Corinthians is? I would say it is reproof, challenging the wrong actions of the Corinthian church, their doctrine wasn't unsound, just their understanding of how it works in practice.

So do you think you might have something in common with the Corinthian church?

We could look into the background of Corinth but it's not really necessary. Often it is made out to be a licentious place full of debauchery and all the things offensive to a Christian sensibility. Now this is true, but not more than any other place in the Greek or Roman world, Both known for this kind of living. In fact the Christians of these days may share much in common with what we have today.

So this is a letter to a church that existed in a town with many of the same morality issues that we have today. For reproof from wrong actions due to their misunderstanding and inactions with regard to their structure.

Do you know where Paul was when he wrote this letter? 1 Corinthians 16:8 says he was in Ephesus, so why is that significant? Well let's read some of Acts 19: 8-12, 18-20, 23-28. In Ephesus Paul faced a riot and a revival, yet in terms of debauchery, Ephesus had the temple of Diana, a place

where the practice of temple prostitution took place, as well as idol worship, magic, and demonic works. So if they had the experience they did, then there was no excuse for Corinth.

So this letter is sent to reprove their conduct, but based on what? Where does Paul get the right to reprove them from?

What did 2 Timothy say? All scripture. But what Scripture? It has to be the Old Testament because the New is still being written.

So we can say with absolute certainty that when we read the letter to the Corinthians, it is a commentary on Old Testament scripture, put in a practical way to apply to the church. Remember the Chuck Misler quote:

The Old Testament is the New Testament concealed the New Testament is the Old Testament revealed.

But who is the church here at Corinth? Is it Jewish or Gentile? Let's have a look at its beginning; let's read Acts 18:1-11.

The answer is it's a mix, with the ruler of the synagogue converting.

So this letter is to a Jewish/Gentile mix, to reprove them, using the Old Testament. And in that context we can see that it has important teaching on how to apply doctrine in practice.

So let's look at this letter and discover what it has to teach us.

Who is the letter from, who is it to and, what does that teach us?

We read that the letter is from two people, Paul and Sosthenes.

Who is Sosthenes? Lets go back to Acts 18: 11-17. Here is the new leader of the synagogue, and as we read the Jews listened to Paul and ignored what he had to say and decided against him.

This is a familiar picture in Paul's travels, but he always starts in the Synagogues first, why do you think?

Now often people think it's because the Gospel is to go to the Jew first. What did Jesus say to the Syro-Phoenician woman, Matthew 15:24-26 but that was Jesus, not the Gospel, in the feeding of the 5000, the food went from Jesus to the Apostles, from the Apostles to the Jews and then there was left overs. So the Apostles were to take the message out.

What does Paul call Himself at the beginning of this letter? An Apostle, so what are Apostles?

Well we have the 12 Apostles, who have a place in the book of Revelation 21:14. We often call these an apostle with a capital 'A', but are there any other apostles?

Acts 14:14, Romans 16:7

So are these apostles the same as the disciples? Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians 12:28, it's a ministry or work that somebody can be called to. So the answer is yes they are the same. The capital 'A' notion is only important if you believe in the authority of the Apostles. This idea that they were the leaders of the church and that

they passed this down. But are Apostles leaders? The answer is no.

So what are the Apostles? Well the Greek word Apostolos means a delegate or ambassador. In terms it's those sent out from a kingdom to bring an important message.

What does Angelos mean? Its Angel or one with a message from God.

So what do you think the difference is? Did the angels of Revelation have to be good? The answer is no, even the bad ones were doing the Lords will.

But do all Apostles have to be believers? The answer would be yes 1 Corinthians 11:13

So Paul goes to great length to show that he is an apostle, and that his calling is from God to this role. One which is defined by carrying a message out. So who was Paul commissioned to carry His message too? Romans 11:13 and they were called by the Lord, Acts 13:2-4.

So why does Paul go to the synagogue first? Because that's where those who are interested in the Lord are. And Paul is sent to bring them the message of the kingdom, it is his task.

But we didn't answer who Sosthenes is. Just that he was the new leader of the Jewish Synagogue which had taken a set against Paul. Now back in Acts we read that as the Jews try their usual trick of trying to get Paul arrested, the Greek judge simply isn't interested in this Jewish religious

idea. They are outsiders in the town, because they are monotheistic (believe in one God), unlike the Greeks. And they take it upon themselves to punish the Jews for stirring up trouble? Why do you think they do that?

Look in Acts 19:35-41. So the danger is the peace of Rome being broken, and it's not just from fear, Corinth was very loyal to the Roman Empire.

So in Sosthenes you have a man who is singled out to represent a Jewish ethnic group, which is clearly marginalised and separated in the town of Corinth.

Why would the church be interested in knowing such a man was with Paul. Well what does Paul call Him? A brother. So we can assume he has accepted Christ.

So in Sosthenes we have a man who represents the enemies of the Corinthian church, and a miscreant of Corinth society, now formally one of them, a brother in Christ.

Proving that even the vilest offender of the Corinthian church and people can become as one of them. And that Paul was called by God for this purpose.

So that's who sends it; but who is it to?

Read verse 2

The sanctified ones, so how are we sanctified? Hebrews 10:4-14.

In other words, all those who have accepted Christ as Saviour. But then

it goes on to say all those in every place. So although this letter was written to Corinth, it wasn't exclusively for them alone, it was a circular letter to be shared. Even though there are some personal to Corinth items in this letter.

But it would seem obvious to say that this is a letter to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, so why say it? Remember paper and ink aren't cheap, every word is necessary and not artistic babble.

So what is Paul doing in saying this is who the letter is to?

He is separating.

As the Jews separated themselves from the Christians, as the Corinthians separated themselves from the Jews, Paul is separating his audience, in to those who have called on the name of the Lord and are sanctified and those who aren't.

Why? Because this is the only separation there is. Saved and unsaved. And yet we must remember there is a separation.

You cannot reprove the unsaved, there is only one message for them, the Gospel.

But it also sets the tone for the letter.

What is the reason Paul gives for sending the letter?

Have a look at verse 11,

We don't know who Chloe is, but her name means a tender shoot, she is

probably a member of the church but from a typological statement we can see that it is the new shoots which see the issues first.

But what is the issue? The answer is contentions. The Greek word is 'eris', meaning a quarrel. So is it referring to just this quarrel or all of the various issues in the book?

I would say it is this one, and then Paul uses it as an excuse to answer various other issues which the Corinthians have written to Paul about.

So the issue Chloe has seen is found in verse 12-13, so what's the error here. It may seem like factionalism, but what is the church known for in the last 3 centuries? Its denominations! Are they wrong?

Remember the errors I have taught you of the Protestant and Catholic movements that they are not the bride but Babylon the false church, the true church is found in the Anabaptists, often churches and denominations following the revelations of just a few men. Is this factionalism?

In essence it is, but remember back to the greeting, is Paul against factionalism? No he sets up one, the saved and the unsaved.

The issue isn't the factionalism per say, but the reason for the factionalism. Why do you think they are claiming to be of one or another?

The answer is superiority; this is a "who is the greatest" question.

Paul was known as a brash and to

the point man, an uncultured Jew in Greek eyes, but a learned teacher of the law in Jewish eyes.

Apollos was an eloquent speaker, fervent and poetic in his speech.

So which would you prefer? It's not unfair to know who you learn best from, in our pulpit you may prefer, Christine, Alan or John to me, this doesn't upset me, nor is it wrong for you to prefer them.

But to actively pitch yourself into a faction behind them and against the others is the error. What is it they are trying to do to Paul, Apollos and Peter? They are trying to make them a king. What's the problem with that? Judges 9:1-24; once you do, then they kill each other off until one is left

This is the old issue in Israel, but who is our king? It is Christ. No leader should be put upon a pedestal, nor any teacher. Of course you know this, but this is what Paul covers before he even gets into the discussion.

Have a look at 1 Corinthians 1:4-9, who is it that gave all of these good gifts to the church? It is Christ and it is commonly shared amongst the people.

It's not the factions that are wrong, it's the intentions to make them rulers over ourselves. Why would they do it? 1 Samuel 8:4-7 because they don't want to come to God for themselves, they want someone else to do it.

But Paul now makes it clear of the calibre of people that the Lord has called to teach in verses 26-29, weak

and foolish,

Now Paul is not weak or foolish, so you could say he is being self-deprecating. But in His current position he is weak, because what are his strengths? Philippians 3:5-6 what use is that to a man called to preach to gentiles, who themselves have been brought up in a deistic culture, with immorality taught as a standard? A life he had actively shunned his whole life and deliberately kept away from.

What you were before you came to the cross is not what the Lord is after. It is to use you in ways you haven't thought of, to people you don't know. You just have to be obedient, and why? Well verses 29-31, so the Lord gets the victory, just like with Gideon. And it takes us back to the beginning, all the good gifts given to the church are given by Christ, including good teachers.

Why does Paul thank God for not baptising many of them?

The answer is because of his ministry as an apostle, it was to be an ambassador for the king, a delegate with a message, and not a replacement for the king, or a viceroy or governor.

In baptising them they could claim a special closeness in order to lord it over others.

But Paul makes it clear that it isn't baptism that saves you but the cross and yet the very thought of that shows it is not an intellectual argument

In fact its foolishness. And a stumbling block.

Who is it foolishness and a stumbling block to?

The Greeks and the Jews who don't know the Lord.

Because the message of the whole chapter is Now remember these are the factions of the city, but the real factions of the city are those who are saved and those are not.

Carefully prescribed words using the scriptures, such as Paul preached won't do it

Nor the eloquent poetry of Apollos, Yet what does Romans 10:11-17 says, so we must preach in order that faith can be produced. Not an intellectual argument, not a force of personality, not the sound of a keyboard in the background.

For faith, and it was by faith that we accepted Christ, not by the skill of the preacher. Many of us can't even remember what was said. So think on that, is Billy Graham a better evangelist than you, not if you try just as hard as he did.

But why is this in the middle of a discussion on mak

this 'it is the Lord who is the head', who gives the good gifts and who saved us, and it is He and He alone that sanctified us

Church Fellowship BBQ & Picnic

Saturday 2nd July
1pm - 5pm

Red House Cottage
off Burnley Road
Clayton le Moors
BB5 5UD



Please add your name to the sheet in minor hall if you are attending,
(For catering purposes.)

Church Vision

“We as the body will seek continually to know the Lord as our beloved, to study His word that we may know Him better and that we may be witnesses of Christ Jesus in all the world that we inhabit”.

Church Values and Behaviours

“That we as a church will seek to Reach, Teach and Keep men and women, boys and girls to be citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven accessed through salvation in Jesus Christ”

1. We believe that the Bible (i.e. the Old and New Testaments excluding the Apocrypha), is the inspired Word of God, the infallible, all sufficient rule for faith and practice (2 Tim. 3:15-16; 2 Peter 1:21).

2. We believe in the unity of the One True and Living God who is the Eternal, Self-Existent "I AM", Who has also revealed Himself as One being co-existing in three Persons – Father, Son and Holy Spirit (Deut. 6:4; Mark 12:29; Matt 28:19; 2 Cor. 13:14).

3. We believe in the Virgin Birth, Sinless Life, Miraculous Ministry, Substitutionary Atoning Death, Bodily Resurrection, Triumphant Ascension and Abiding Intercession of the Lord Jesus Christ and in His personal, visible, bodily return in power and glory as the blessed hope of all believers (Isa. 7:14; Matt. 1:23; Heb. 7:26; 1 Pet. 2:22; Acts 2:22, 10:38; 2 Cor. 5:21; Heb. 9:12; Luke 24:39; 1 Cor. 15:4; Acts 1:9; Eph. 4:8-10; Rom. 8:34; Heb. 7:25; 1 Cor. 15:22-24, 51-57; 1 Thess. 4:13-18; Rev. 20:1-6).

4. We believe in the fall of man, who was created pure and upright, but fell by voluntary transgression (Gen. 1:26-31, 3:1-7; Rom. 5:12-21).

5. We believe in salvation through faith in Christ, who, according to the Scriptures, died for our sins, was buried and was raised from the dead on the third day, and that through His Blood we have Redemption (Titus 2:11, 3:5-7; Rom. 10:8-15; 1 Cor. 15:3-4). This experience is also known as the new birth, and is an instantaneous and complete operation of the Holy Spirit upon initial faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. (John 3:5-6; James 1:18; 1 Pet. 1:23; 1 John 5:1).

6. We believe that all who have truly repented and believed in Christ as Lord and Saviour are commanded to be baptised by immersion in water (Matt. 28:19; Acts 10:47-48; Acts 2:38-39).

7. We believe in the baptism in the Holy Spirit as an endowment of the believer with power for service, the essential, biblical evidence of which is the speaking with other tongues as the Spirit gives utterance (Acts 1:4-5, 8, 2:4, 10:44-46, 11:14-16, 19:6).

8. We believe in the operation of the gifts of the Holy Spirit and the gifts of Christ in the Church today (1 Cor. 12:4-11, 28; Eph. 4:7-16).

9. We believe in holiness of life and conduct in obedience to the command of God (1 Pet.1:14-16; Heb. 12:14; 1 Thess. 5:23; 1 John 2:6).

10. We believe that deliverance from sickness, by Divine Healing is provided for in the Atonement (Isa. 53:4-5, Matt. 8:16-17, James 5:13-16).

11. We believe that all who have truly repented and believe in Christ as Lord and Saviour should regularly participate in Breaking of Bread (Luke 22:14-20; 1 Cor. 11:20-34).

12. We believe in the bodily resurrection of all men, the everlasting conscious bliss of all who truly believe in our Lord Jesus Christ and the everlasting conscious punishment of all whose names are not written in the Book of Life (Dan. 12:2-3; John 5:28-29, 1 Cor. 15:22-24; Matt. 25:46; 2 Thess. 1:9; Rev. 20:10-15).

written by christine morris

One of the hardest things about living the Christian lifestyle is giving up your desires and trading them in for God's. In other words, you can't be selfish anymore! It isn't what you want anymore, it isn't about what makes you happy but it now becomes about what God wants; His will in your life and His will in this world. This is a transition that most Christians never make. They never stop trying to figure out their lives, they never do the things that God wants them to do, and they never fully trust that God knows what's best. We want to teach the children that being a Christian is wanting what God has for them more than anything else. We want the children to seek God's kingdom first, to want the things that God wants, to live the way God wants them to live, and to want everything God has for them. What does God have for them? God has a hope and a future for them. He has everlasting love, joy, peace, wisdom and understanding for them. God wants them to forgive those who hurt them. He wants them to go into their homes and schools to tell others about him. He also wants them to show kindness to everyone. We want the kids to learn that no matter what God has for them they should want that more than anything else. They should desire everything in God's kingdom.

Back in 2009, a 16-year-old girl was sacked from her office job because her manager saw - on Facebook - that she had said her job was "boring". She was called into her manager's office and given the following letter:

"Following your comments made on Facebook... we feel it is better that, as you are not happy and do not enjoy your work we end your employment with (our company)."

She was sacked because she was bored with her job?

Boredom is all a matter of perception. I want to share a popular set of rules for the office in the 1800's. Rules like this were common in most offices, and they all looked a little bit like these:

1. Office employees will daily sweep the floors, dust the furniture, and showcases. Each day they must fill lamps, clean chimneys, & turn wicks
2. Windows must be washed once a week.

3. Each clerk will bring in a bucket of water and a scuttle of coal for the day's business.

4. Make your pens carefully. You may whittle your nibs to your individual taste.

5. This office will open at 7:00 a.m. and close at 9:00 p.m. daily, except on Sunday, on which day it will remain closed. Each employee is expected to spend Sunday by attending church and contributing liberally to the cause of the Lord.

6. Men employees will be given an evening off each week for courting purposes, or 2 evening a week if they go regularly to church.

7. After an employee has spent 13 hours of labour in the office, he should spend the rest of his time reading the Bible any other good books while contemplating the glories and building up of the kingdom.

8. Every employee should lay aside, from each pay, a goodly sum of his earning, so that he will not become a burden upon the charity of his betters.

9. The employee who has performed his labours faithfully and without fault for a period of 5 years and who had been thrifty and attentive to his religious duties, is looked upon by his fellowmen as a substantial and law-abiding citizen, will be given an increase of 5 pence per day in his pay providing a just return in profits from the business permits it.

How many of you would sign up for a

job like that?Yeah, that's what I thought.

Well, it a good thing Solomon was King... because he said pretty much the same thing about his "job". He not only found his job boring, he wrote: "I hated life, because the work that is done under the sun was grievous to me. All of it is meaningless, a chasing after the wind." Ecclesiastes 2:17. Solomon found his job not only boring... but empty? But he's the King. He's got everything a man could want. How could he possibly feel like that? Whoa! – you can have all the wealth, power and prestige - and STILL feel empty? Solomon is telling us that EVEN if you had all kinds of wealth (power/prestige) it wouldn't guarantee happiness and fulfilment in life.

In fact this whole book of Ecclesiastes, if you like, was a quest, a crusade, a journey, an adventure for this man's happiness. Solomon went into every sin that you could possibly imagine. Solomon was a brilliant administrator, he was an able politician, he was a shrewd military commander and leader, he was a knowledgeable naturalist, he was a prolific lyricist - he wrote over 1,000 songs and 3,000 proverbs. He was the wealthiest king that almost ever lived, he had 1,400 chariots, he had 12,000 horses, his annual income was 23 metric tonnes of gold - per year! This man had 700 wives, he had 300 concubines. But this man says these awful words - Ecclesiastes 2 verses 10 and 11: "Whatever my eyes wanted I did not keep away from them. I did not keep my heart from anything that was pleasing, for my heart was

pleased with all my work. This was my reward for all my work. Then I thought about all that my hands had done, and the work I had done. I saw that it was all for nothing. It was like trying to catch the wind, and there was nothing to get for it under the sun." Now what's he saying? He's saying simply this: 'I've tried everything! I've tried every avenue that the world, that the devil himself and my own body can open - I've tried it all. But under the sun' - this great man of wisdom, the wisest man that ever lived apart from the Lord Himself, said that - 'under the sun there is no lasting happiness in anything'

Isn't that tragic? Isn't that a cry of despair?

That's what Jesus said in Luke chapter 12 and verse 15 - that the consistency of life, and the meaning of life, and the importance of life, and the satisfaction of life is not to be found in things. "Watch yourselves! Keep from wanting all kinds of things you should not have. A man's life is not made up of things, even if he has many riches." - it can't be brought to you through externals, it can't be brought through feelings, it can't be brought through medicine, it can't be brought through alcohol, through relationships, it can't be brought through intellect. Happiness - true joy, true meaning, satisfaction - cannot be brought from without to within, it just does not happen.

Am I saying, today, that happiness cannot be achieved? That's not quite what I'm saying, but what I am saying is that physical things cannot touch the soul. In Ecclesiastes chap-

ter 5 and verse 13 Solomon went on to say: "There is something very wrong which I have seen under the sun: Riches being kept by the owner and he is hurt by them". He is saying the most terrible thing, almost, that he has seen - as he has looked for joy, as he has looked for happiness, as he has delved into everything - is that external things do not even bring joy, but they bring sorrow and misery!

You see, when Solomon wrote Ecclesiastes his intention was to paint a picture for us. The main focus of his picture was to expose the things of this world that entice us - the things that we THINK will make us feel fulfilled and happy. And once he painted the picture for us... he pointed out why those pleasures in this world will disappoint us.

Everything on this earth that you treasure will eventually bore you. They'll all seem empty and worthless in the end. And they'll seem empty and worthless UNTIL we put one thing in our lives: GOD

If you put God at the centre of your life and everything else will fall into place. If you don't... it won't. In Psalm 127:1 we're told: "Unless the LORD builds the house, those who build it labour in vain. Unless the LORD watches over the city, the watchman stays awake in vain." It's the same message. If God isn't the centre of your life (your house), it won't matter what you build. It will all be in vain. But by contrast, in 1 Corinthians 15:58 Paul says: "... be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labour is NOT IN VAIN."

And Paul wasn't talking JUST about Churchy stuff, because in Colossians 3:17 he writes: "whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus..." So Paul's telling us if we do - what we do - in the name of Jesus NOTHING we do will be in vain.

Now, how does that work? How can we do what we do in the name of Jesus?

- 1st - if you do what you do for Jesus, your primary objective will NOT be to gain possessions/power/prestige. Not, that there's anything wrong with having possessions, power or prestige. But our work belongs to Jesus. Not to us! As a result, our jobs are NOT what define us. Our jobs are NOT the most important thing we do. Our jobs are NOT how we measure success. It is not how we make our lives.

- 2nd - if you do what you do for Jesus, you'll work because it feels good to work.

It was what God designed you to do. We weren't designed to sit back and be lazy.

- 3rd, if you do what you do for Jesus, you will work so that we can bring praise to God. Jesus said: "Let your light so shine before men... that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven" in Matthew 5:16. People should be able to watch us and see how well we do things and just KNOW. And that should make them a little jealous of what we have with God.

Are you making people jealous? Are

you working for the Lord in His service? Are you sure that what you are doing is in His will and purpose for your life, or are you still seeking after your own selfish desires? One day you will stand before Him....and if you have just read this, when you do stand there, you now can't say.. "But I didn't know"!

What does God have for you to do?.....seek after it with all you have, but especially your heart; then you will be satisfied.

There are many things that need to be done in the kingdom and as such we have created a structure at Grace which allows people to move out into that good work the Lord has put into your heart. Our hope as a church is to release people into that gifting, which the Lord has given, so we may reach out in many directions, and it is Jesus who is directing us.

All our activities here at Grace are for the purpose of seeing our vision outworked in people's lives. And to do this, whatever it is that you feel the Lord has called you to do is either to: -

Reach = aimed at anyone who does not know the Lord Jesus as saviour and so is designed to teach them this truth by having an activity which the gospel may be audibly shared at.

Teach = aimed at those who know the Lord as saviour that they can learn more about Christ and his nature, so we can be more like Him every day

Keep = for the purpose of meeting together to encourage one another with the Lord, to grow up in Christ.

Serve = to make the process of Reaching, Teaching and Keeping possible, through the practical assistance needed.

If you have such an idea, brewing within you and you don't even know where to start, then can I encourage you to get in touch with me on either my email or by phone. We will talk about it and begin the process of getting this God given calling into practice

However, for others it may be that you don't want to start an activity but look to help out with the existing church tasks. It's just you don't know where to start. So the 'Gizza job' section of our 'Inspiration' magazine is to let you know about the ongoing roles, that need to be filled. Have a read of the descriptions and if you feel you can help, then please get in touch with the contact in the advert.

For activity leaders, if you would like to advertise a role your looking for volunteers in, then please submit your advert to the communications team, with your contact details, so that people can get in touch.

The Lord bless you in your service for His kingdom.

SUNDAY SCHOOL CO-ORDINATORS

WANTED!

Someone who feels that they are called to organise and run our Sunday School. Someone who has a vision of where our Sunday school could go and to put in place a programme that runs alongside our church vision, that will be ready for when the Lord brings in young families.

Please speak to Melanie Boulton, if you feel this is you.

SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHERS

We are looking for people who feel called to work with children. Who want to teach them and help them in their journey with the Lord.

If you are willing to give up 1 Sunday morning in every 4 then please speak to Melanie Boulton.

FLOATERS AND MINGLERS

Positions: The more the merrier.

Venue: Food for thought Specials

Date and time: To be announce

Job description: Those willing to attend our Specials to float and mingle with the folks who attend. To sit and listen, to chat and be willing to talk about the Lord. To offer help and assistance where needed.

Love is patient and kind, love does not envy or boast, love is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way. It is not irritable or resentful, it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all, believes all things. Love never ends. 1 Corinthians 13 v 3-7

If you are willing to fill these positions, or for further information, please contact Carol Duxbury 07400523995 Pastor Jamie Boulton. 01254 54541

STEWARDS

We are looking for individuals who would like to help out with one or more of the various stewardship jobs that are needed to make the church services possible. The various stewardship jobs are: Setting up the Communion, Handing out the communion, tidying away the Communion set, Greeting people at the door, helping people to find a seat, encouraging new people by helping them to find a seat and introducing them to the people sat around them, handing out of literature, and helping with practical issues during the services. Some of these jobs are already done by some people, but we are always looking for new people to help on a rota basis. Anyone wishing to take on one of these tasks must feel a sense of calling from the Lord and a passion to serve one another. Stewards will be responsible to the Stewards Coordinator and must follow their instructions as activity leader

If you are interested or would like to know more, then please contact Jamie on 01254 54541, or email pastorgracechurchblackburn@hotmail.co.uk, and title the email Stewards

STEWARD CO-ORDINATOR

We are looking for an individual who would like to become an activity leader, coordinating the church's stewards. The stewards of the church are those individuals who pass around the communion and help to set it up/ put it away; stand and greet people at the door passing out the relevant literature; and help new people to find a seat, introduce them to the people around them and make them feel welcome. The coordinators role is to make sure all of these tasks are running as they should, training and encouraging the stewards in their roles, planning rota's and delivering them. The individual should feel called to the role by the Lord and have a passion to make people feel welcome and challenged. The steward's coordinator will be part of the ministry team's department and be overseen by the ministry team's deacon. This is a serve activity

Activity leaders are required to agree to conform to 10 standards, the two which are prerequisites of applying are that you have been in attendance of Grace church Blackburn for at least 3 months and you are a member.

If you are interested or would like to know more, then please contact Jamie on 01254 54541, or email pastorgracechurchblackburn@hotmail.co.uk, and title the email steward's coordinator

DEACONS

We are looking to fill a number of various deacons roles within the church. Deacons here at Grace have the job of overseeing our departments in the day to day running of the church. The role of Deacon is threefold.

1. The Deacon meets with the activity leaders to encourage them in the work they are doing, obtain a report or request for finance and assistance, check the activity is still running as the activity leader said they wanted it too. They do this for each activity leader in their department, balancing and encouraging their needs with one another.
2. Meet quarterly as part of the church council to bring a report on the progress of the activities in the last quarter and inform of the plans for the new quarter. They bring any request for finance or assistance and represent the department in all decisions made.
3. They help nurture brand new activities, in their department, into being so that they can run effectively.

Each one of our departments looks to serve the work of the kingdom in three particular ways. Our Spiritual departments are concerned with reaching, teaching and keeping people for the Lord; our service Departments look to make the work of the church legal, safe and possible; and our inspirational departments look to inspire the church into service.

The Deacon role requires a great deal of commitment, has a great deal of responsibility and is completed by those who have a heart to serve others rather than lead. Those wishing to take on this role must know that they are called by the Lord to do it. **As the role may need a better explanation, please feel free to enquire for more information.**

Deacons are required to agree to conform to 10 standards, the two which are prerequisites of applying are that you have been in attendance of Grace church Blackburn for at least 3 months and you are a member.

Deacons, as representatives of a department must be elected by the church. If you would like to apply, please be aware that a vote will taken on completion of your application process. This is not a popularity contest, but one based on suitability.

If you are interested or would like to know more, then please contact Jamie on 01254 54541, or email pastorgracechurchblackburn@hotmail.co.uk, and title the email Deacon

MUSICIAN

Have you got a talent hidden under a bushel? Can you play a musical instrument? Are you ready and willing to use that talent for the Glory of God and the extension of His kingdom?

There are 2 positions available and no reason whatsoever that one person could not serve both.

Position 1.

Venue: Grace Community Church. Minor Hall.

Date and time: Every Friday 1-2 pm

Job description: To serve the Living God and provide a musical accompaniment for in our weekly Oasis 55+ Meeting.

Position 2.

Venue: Grace Community Church. Minor Hall.

Date and time. Quarterly. To be announced.

Job description: To serve the Lord, who is not willing that any should perish and provide musical accompaniment to our "Food for thought" outreach Specials.

If you are willing to fill either or both these positions, or for further information, please contact Carol Duxbury 07400523995 Pastor Jamie Boulton. 01254 54541

Carol Duxbury 07400523995 or Pastor Jamie Boulton. 01254 54541

The Lord bless your prayerful consideration.

CLEANER

We are looking for individuals who feel they could just give a part of their time a week to regularly clean a part of the building. Anyone wishing to take on this role must feel a calling from the Lord to do it and have a passion for the building to look its best for the work of the Lord. Cleaners will be responsible to the Cleaning coordinator and must agree to follow their instructions as activity leader.

If you are interested or would like to know more, then please contact Jamie on 01254 54541, or email pastorgracechurchblackburn@hotmail.co.uk, and title the email Cleaner

CLEANING CO-ORDINATOR

We are looking for an individual who would like to become an activity leader, coordinating the Church's cleaning. This does not mean you are doing all of the cleaning, but rather coordinating the cleaning that is done, as well as having the responsibility for the cleaning budget. The Individual should feel called to the role by the Lord, with a passion in their hearts that the building should be a clean, warm and safe environment for church activities to take place in. The cleaning coordinator will be part of our building management department and will be overseen by the Building management department Deacon. This is a serve activity.

This is what the role begins like but were looking for someone who can make it so much more than it is as described here

Activity leaders are required to agree to conform to 10 standards. The two which are prerequisites of applying are that you have been in attendance of Grace Church Blackburn for at least 3 months and you are a member.

If you are interested or would like to know more, then please contact Jamie on 01254 54541, or email pastorgracechurchblackburn@hotmail.co.uk, and title the email Cleaning Coordinator

PRAYERS

Wanted. Willing and conscientious participants to smother our "Food for thought" Specials in prayer.

Positions: Too many is never enough.

Venue: The Lord is near to all who call upon Him, to all who call upon Him in truth. Ps 145 v 18 anywhere and our church Prayer meeting.

Date and time: Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful. Col 4 v 2, Pray continually 1Thessalonias 5 v 17.

Job description: I urge, then first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people. 1 Tim 2 v 1-2. Pray without ceasing

To pledge your help and support. Please contact by way of encouragement. or for further information, please contact Carol Duxbury 07400523995 Pastor Jamie Boulton. 01254 54541

HUB LEADER

We are looking for individuals who would be willing to open up their home one night a week to run a Hub group. The role will involve coordinating a meeting (although not necessarily doing every part) where a group of 5 to 7 attendees of the church may attend to fellowship, study, pray and worship together. Currently the details are being worked out and we are looking for individuals who may be interested in knowing a little more about the role. An enquiry doesn't mean you have agreed to do it.

If you are interested or would like to know more, then please contact Jamie on 01254 54541, or email pastorgracechurchblackburn@hotmail.co.uk, and title the email Hub Leader

GENERAL FACTOTUMS

We are looking for people who are willing to be putter uppers and taker downers in our "Food for thought" Specials.

For further information, please contact Carol Duxbury 07400523995 Pastor Jamie Boulton. 01254 54541

I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. Phil 4 v 13



THE SONG OF SOLOMON

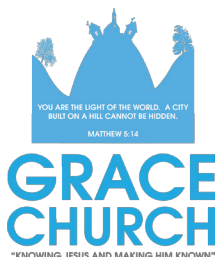
DEVOTIONAL STUDY

DO YOU WANT TO GET TO KNOW THE LORD A LITTLE BETTER?

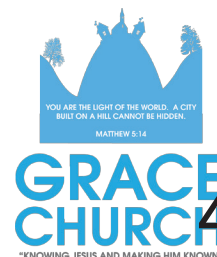
When a celebrity comes to town they are often behind security guards and fences, so you would think the same would be true of the Lord but you would be wrong. Song of Solomon is a poem written about the journey of attraction to marriage and the love that grows therein. This poem is in the Bible because it teaches us that unlike celebrity's, the Lord doesn't want a stand off relationship but an intimate one. Song of Solomon takes us as Christians on a journey, explaining the love the Lord has for us and why and what love we should reciprocate, whilst explaining the very mysteries of why marriage is a foreshadow of the things to come. If you want to get to know the Lord better then please join us in this devotional study.

STUDIES WILL BE EMAILED IN A PDF FORMAT EACH WEEK

**WANT TO REGISTER FOR THIS STUDY OR NEED MORE INFO?
CONTACT US:**



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e: graceccblackburn@gmail.com
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