



Our Messenger

No 102 November 2010



**I have declared Your
faithfulness**

Psalm 40:10 (NKJV)

...on some have compassion, making a distinction; but others save with fear,
pulling *them* out of the fire... Jude v23

November is the month of remembering for many reasons. At the beginning of our summer holiday my wife and I visited the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire. Covering many acres memorials have been raised to the many brave men and women from all the national forces over the years during war and peace who have given their lives in the service of others. One memorial struck me in particular. It was raised in memory of members of the various fire brigades who died in service. The badge and crest of The Fire and Rescue Service is on our cover this time. The eight pointed star is significant as each point represents a quality needed in a fireman. Those same qualities should be found in every Christian. After all we too are in the business of rescuing precious souls from the fire?

1. TACT

When a fireman is trying to rescue a person in danger they often need great tact in dealing with them. Fear often grips someone in danger so tightly that they simply refuse to do what is necessary for their own good. The rescuer needs to prevent any foolhardy reaction and must win the trust of the person in danger if he is to carry them to safety. As Christians we are, in a sense, on a rescue mission in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. How tactful we need to be when speaking to others about Him yet at the same time remaining truthful about the danger of their situation. Our task is to encourage

people in a winsome way to come to Christ and escape the everlasting, burning wrath of almighty God. We only push them closer to it otherwise.

2. GALLANTRY

When the fireman is facing the flames threatening to destroy a person or property he needs great courage to stand firm to the task. Gallantry is vital and many firemen have perished themselves rather than abandon the work in hand. The Christian in his life and witness must do the same as Paul writes 'be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might' (Ephesians 6:10). We might think of many examples in the Bible of men who stood fast for God in the world and we desperately need many like them today. Will you put on the whole armour of God and stand firm for Him in your situation?

3. DEXTERITY

A fireman when rescuing a person in danger needs great adaptability in dealing with any given situation, no two of which are the same. Paul knew this when he was at work seeking to rescue souls from everlasting fire. Let his words speak for themselves: *'I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win the more; and to the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might win Jews; to those who are under the law, as under the law, that I might win those who are under the law; to those who are without law, as without*

law (not being without law toward God, but under law toward Christ), that I might win those who are without law; to the weak I became as weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all men, that I might by all means save some. Now this I do for the gospel's sake' (1Corinthians 9:19-22).

4. OBSERVATION

When we are about Gospel work what is our focus. The fireman's focus is on the task and person of the moment. He does not allow himself to be sidetracked from the immediate issue. The issue at stake in the Christian's work is the souls of men. Just as Paul watched out for the souls of those to whom he was ministering so must we. Remember too, like him, we must one day give an account of the soul of those we minister to (Hebrews 13:17).

5. PERSEVERANCE

The Christian, like a fireman, must dress suitably for his work. Perhaps the distinctive feature and most vital part of the fireman's equipment is his helmet which protects his head from falling debris. We have a helmet to keep our minds focussed and clear. Paul calls it 'the hope of salvation' (1Thessalonians 5:8). We need to keep our sure and certain hope of heaven in mind if we are to persevere and to present that hope to the lost at the same time. It will give us the protection we need and be the stimulus our quarry needs as well. Remember those who have gone before. It was the hope of heaven that kept the martyrs strong when facing the fires at the stake.

6. LOYALTY

The fireman must be loyal to his officer in

charge and the duty in hand. The person who is most useful to the Lord and lost souls is the person who is truly loyal to Christ and His commands. He loves the Lord and the great commission and also the souls he is seeking to bring to salvation. His method is Christ's, a loving declaration of the Saviour. Remember 'it is required in stewards that one is found faithful' (1Corinthians 4:2).

7. EXPLICITNESS

When about his work the fireman needs a very clear grasp of his duty and the actual rather than the imagined need of the persons he is trying to save. We must never be ashamed of what we are actually about and what the people we speak to actually need. Paul was not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ and nor should we be (Romans 1:16).

8. SYMPATHY

In all our dealings with others we must be careful not to discourage them or display insensitivity. Let us 'rejoice with those who rejoice and weep with those who weep' (Romans 12:15), thus showing a truly Christ-like Spirit in all we do for Him.



Challenges for today

Extracts from the ministry of Dr Martyn Lloyd-Jones

GOD'S LOVE AND JUSTICE ALWAYS AGREE

You must not set the love of God against the justice of God. God always acts in the fullness of His being, He always acts in love; at the same time He always acts in justice, and you must never say that God's love acts apart from His justice or apart from His righteousness. Neither must you say that His justice and His righteousness act apart from His love. God acts as God and you must never drive a wedge between these attributes.

FAITH AND FEELINGS

...Faith leads to feelings, and includes feelings, yet feelings do not come first. The first element in faith is intellectual, the emotional follows. As a phrase in Psalm 34:8 puts it, 'Taste and see that the Lord is good'. You cannot see until you have tasted. We must be clear about the position of feelings. We must not rest too much on them, but neither must we exclude them. Faith is like walking on a knife-edge; if you go too far to one side or the other you will find yourself in trouble.

WHAT THEN IS FAITH?

Faith really means believing God, believing all that He tells us about Himself, all that He tells us about what He has done for us, all that He tells us about what He is going to do, and trusting ourselves utterly and absolutely to that. What is faith? Faith means reasoning and arguing on the basis of revelation. Faith means, not that I try to reason myself to God, but that, believing the revelation

given by God, I reason from it. Faith means drawing out the inevitable deductions from what God has said.

ORIGINAL SIN

If one member of this country should be guilty of a misdemeanour in another country, that other country may well declare war against this country; and though you and I have not committed this misdemeanour we nevertheless suffer the consequences. The other country declares war and we therefore, legally in international law, have been constituted enemies of that country though we have done nothing at all in our own persons. It is a judicial procedure. According to the apostle that is what has happened to us—our position before God judicially has become that of sinners. And notice, we became sinners, not by any personal act on our part at all, but entirely and solely by that one disobedience of Adam.

SEX EDUCATION

I have never believed in what is called morality teaching—I mean the teaching about sex in some quarters as now being introduced into the schools, and for this reason, that, as the result of sin, the minds of children are not pure, and what such teaching is likely to do is create in them a greater desire to know about these things and to do them. They already find out about these matters surreptitiously; and the teaching will simply intensify that interest and stimulate them to sin. Knowledge of sin had never prevented anyone from sinning. Indeed, the more one knows about it the more one is subject to the temptation to do it.

Mission

A visit to Eldoret, Kenya, by Victoria Sayers

Victoria recently spent six weeks in Kenya both visiting the Anderson family and gaining work experience in connection with her nursing degree. In this article she shares with us something of her experiences while there.

Imagine being shunned by your own family, rejected by society, and forced to live on the streets and beg for survival. This was the lot of one woman I met whilst in Kenya. She had been born with a condition which meant that her fingers and toes were fused together. She was unable to walk or care for herself properly. Her days were spent sitting alone in a hut, her sister bringing her food when she could. Unable to defend herself, she was abused, until it was discovered that she was pregnant.



fully understand her grief – he was in every other way a perfectly healthy little boy. Her sister explained to me that if she had been able to produce a ‘normal’ child, she may have been more accepted in their village. Now she would be totally rejected.

I first met her when I was working at a small mission hospital just outside Eldoret. She was in labour and her sister had brought her to the hospital. The baby was safely delivered a few hours later – a little boy. She had passed on her condition to her son. At the time I did not





A couple of weeks later I was walking through the town. I saw her and her son sitting by the side of the road begging. As predicted she had been totally rejected by her family, and was now living on the streets.

Only a few weeks old and already the little boy was showing signs of severe malnutrition. Unable to even care for herself properly, she was struggling to care for her child.

As I continued along the road I saw many more young women with children – all doing their best to keep their children alive, whilst barely surviving themselves. They have nothing, and no-one. Such poverty, and yet there is evident wealth as well. There are people who have nothing living alongside those who have everything.

This contrast hit me when I did some work with ECCO, an organisation who work with street children. Many of them are



starving, and they live in fear. Despite all this they can still produce a smile. I have so much – food to eat, a loving family and friends, and a home. I do not know what it is to be hungry – really hungry; or to lie awake at night wondering if the police are going to come and find me. I cannot begin to imagine what it must be like to spend your day looking through rubbish trying to find scrap to sell, or food to eat. They are surrounded by shops, and people coming and going in big expensive cars. Two completely different worlds and yet they exist side by side.

We went to visit some of the families from the church. They are very poor but they



have small homes – which are just one simple room. They struggle to find the rent for even this, and had not eaten for two or three days. They seemed to just quietly accept the situation – even the children made no fuss. They were obviously supplied with the means to get food. One of these families – a young couple with a nine month old son, has had to move to the village as they cannot afford the three pound a month rent.

Seeing and talking to these people who have literally nothing, really brought home to me how much I have, and how much I take for granted.

Sacrifice o

It was my privilege and blessing recently to join with hundreds of brothers and sisters in Christ at the Annual Meetings Day of Grace Baptist Mission. In the course of the morning business meeting the following extract was quoted from the life of David Livingstone, the great missionary explorer of Africa. At the close of a lecture given in Cambridge after a sixteen year absence and four and a half year separation from his wife and family, with virtually no contact between them, spent travelling in Africa, always attended by sickness and danger of many sorts, the forty five year old missionary said:

“People talk of the sacrifice that I have made in spending so much of my life in Africa. Can that be called a sacrifice which is simply paid back as a small part of a great debt owing to God, which we can never repay?... It is emphatically no sacrifice. Say rather it is a privilege. Anxiety, sickness, suffering, or danger, now and then, with a foregoing of the common experiences and charities of this life, may make us pause, and cause the spirit to waver, and the soul to sink; but let this only be for a moment. All these are nothing when compared with the glory which shall hereafter be revealed in, and for us. I never made a sacrifice. Of this we ought not to talk, when we remember the great sacrifice which He made who left His Father’s throne on high to give Himself for us.”

I found these stirring words a great challenge.

The word sacrifice has come to indicate giving to the Lord at great cost to ourselves and in such a way that it becomes painful and hard to do so. Nothing could be further from the truth than to use the word sacrifice in such a way. I believe we tend to use the word today in a way that focuses on ourselves rather than the one for for we make the sacrifice. This is precisely the way the Pharisees used it. Just think about Jesus’ parable about the Publican and Pharisee in Luke 18:9-14 and especially the Pharisee’s words in verse 11-12.

Surely the right use of the word is when we speak in terms of the one for whom we make the sacrifice. That keeps the perspective right and highlights their worth rather than that of what we do or give.

Sacrifice then becomes, as David Livingstone put it, a privilege and delight. In the context of mission, our missionaries do not make sacrifices so much as freewill offerings of themselves to the Lord and His service. That is what Paul meant when he wrote to the church at Rome and exhorted them to ‘present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service’ (Romans 12:1).

This is where the challenge comes to us does it not. Perhaps we need to rephrase the question 'What has your religion cost you?' to read 'How much do you value your Saviour and love your Lord?'

In this context how do you think the slave who refused his freedom in the year of jubilee would respond to such questions? Remember he had the opportunity of a lifetime to walk away from his servitude. Instead he said to his master 'I love my master, my wife and my children; I will not go out free' (Exodus 21:1-2-6). Did he look at it in terms of cost or love? The answer is obvious.

Even more significantly consider our Lord Himself. Did He consider His humiliation and suffering in terms of cost or love? Paul is emphatic when he writes that He 'did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped...but...He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death' (Philippians 2:6-8 ESV). The mind that was in Him was full of love to His Father whom He obeyed and love for the people He came to redeem. Our salvation was not conceived and brought about in terms of cost but of love.

Now to ourselves. In what terms do you consider your life for the Lord; your giving to His work; your devotion to His cause? We shall soon be singing the beautiful Christmas hymns and among them quite possibly 'In the bleak midwinter'. Allowing poetic licence for the references to winter the last verse carol asks the question

'What can I give Him, Poor as I am?'

The answer comes back,

'If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb.

If I were a wise man, I would do my part.

Yet what I can I give Him—Give my heart.'

To 'Give my heart' is tantamount to saying 'Give my all'!

At a time of year when people use their resources to enjoy festivity and, let's be honest, a family time which is in reality an excuse for a good time for ourselves, what are we prepared to forgo for Christ? Should we not curtail our own enjoyment for the sake of the Gospel? Ought we not to cut back on our Christmas expenditure so that we can give instead to the Lord's work? This should not be seen as a sacrifice but as a privilege. Our giving to the Lord's work should increase rather than decrease at this time of year. We and our families should be prepared to go without in order that Gospel work might be furthered. After all if our Lord in love left heaven for the cross, should we, not only be prepared to curtail our festivities for Him, but actually do so?

Pastor

The Challenge of Discipleship Luke 14:25-35

(Adapted from Geneva Bible Notes)

Many people followed Christ and had various reasons for doing so. Some would enjoy His condemnation of the establishment and others would hope to see miracles. Some admired His wisdom and some were just curious. Many who follow Jesus today are as ignorant of the real demands of discipleship as were the crowds who followed him then. He addressed such people by presenting three features of true discipleship:

CHRIST MUST BE CENTRAL v26

If Christ takes anything less than first place in our lives, then we have not come to terms with His claims upon us. Following Christ means allowing His absolute, undisputed authority over us and giving him full, submissive obedience in total trust. The Bible is not contradictory and passages like Exodus 20:12 and Ephesians 5:22 still stand, but here, as elsewhere, Jesus uses overstatement to illustrate His point. There are times when we find ourselves being pulled in two directions when faced with apparently conflicting responsibilities to the Lord and to our family. Here is the guiding principle. Love for Christ must come first but that involves, and is often worked out through loving our families. We must be on our guard for those times when loving our families becomes paramount and is expressed at the expense of our devotion to Him.

THE COST MUST BE COUNTED v27-33

Following Christ is all-embracing. There is no part of life that can be excluded from it. It is not like a hobby which can be

picked up and put down as the mood takes us. However, we ought to give due consideration to the consequences before we take such a step. On the one hand, if we surrender our life to Christ, we face the possibility of pain and deprivation as a result of alienating ourselves from the world around us. On the other hand, such a surrender brings freedom from sin, acceptance with God, a place in glory and the constant help of Christ now. If the expected loss is perceived to be greater than the expected gain, there can be no genuine repentance and faith, for in such a case neither the consequences of sin, nor the uniqueness of Christ have been recognised for what they are.

THE CHARACTER MUST BE CLEAR v34,35

The essence of discipleship is to put all selfishness aside, and not allow our reputation, career, possessions etc. to become dominant. There must be something distinctive about the Christian which is evident to all around him. It must be the life of Christ within him. Christ has an identity all of His own, which is so different from that of the rest of the world. If the Christian is not demonstrably like Him, he does not deserve the name. One key function of the Christian life is to reveal Christ to those who probably would not find out about Him any other way. Your neighbour will read you before they read the Bible. What do they see? A churchgoer? A do-gooder? Someone who is stand-offish?

9 Or someone who has about them the fragrance of Christ?

Mystery

God planned His people's glory before the world began.
This is the deepest mystery, showing His love to man.
It is a hidden wonder, God only knows its worth,
In part revealed at Christmas with our lowly Saviour's birth.

The mystery of God's love comes to us in Christ the Lord.
Heaven's beloved, ever by angel hosts adored.
He's the brightness of God's glory, everything in Him consists;
Yet in humanity He came. He left that home of bliss.

Faith too is a mystery. That God of His free grace
Should give his well-beloved for such a sinful race;
Faith to trust in Jesus that Babe of lowly birth
Who came to die on Calvary and bring true peace to earth.

The mystery of humility, Jesus born an infant boy,
Yet adored by angels, shepherds, kings, in their resounding joy.
Come let us join this Christmas to praise our Saviour Lord;
For He alone is worthy and the one to be adored.

Great is the wondrous mystery, God manifest like this.
God the holy Son; taking on our human flesh;
Justified in the Spirit; seen by angels; preached to men;
Believed on in the world; received to glory once again.

Do you know this Jesus who'll supply your every need;
Pardon, peace, protection, a friend to guide and lead?
This is a matchless mystery that God will dwell in you
And give new life, with new desires and hope of glory too.

EBENEZER REFORMED BAPTIST CHURCH BRIGHTON

Our friends at Ebenezer Baptist Church in Brighton have recently undergone a complete rebuild of their church premises and it was a privilege to be able to join them at their thanksgiving and formal opening on 21st August. After a brief outline of the church's plans in the coming months by Pastor Tony Bickley, Pastor Alec Taylor from Birmingham preached an encouraging sermon from Peter's first letter concerning the living stones that make up the church of the Lord Jesus Christ. The articles on this page have been taken from the church's website and invitation to the opening meetings to encourage your interest and prayer.



EBENEZER

Ebenezer is a Reformed Baptist church based in Brighton on the South Coast of England. Although the name 'Ebenezer' conjures up the image of old Ebenezer Scrooge from 'A Christmas Carol', the meaning of the word Ebenezer couldn't be further away from that.

Ebenezer actually means '*Thus far the Lord has helped us*' (1 Samuel 7:12). This is something that the church has experienced over the years, but it is also something that each individual Christian has experienced in their own lives.

In the Bible, God says He will never leave or forsake His people. He loved His people so much that He sent His Son, Jesus to save them. The Bible tells us that God so loved the world that He sent His only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life' (John 3:16).

THE CHURCH'S JOURNEY

Every journey begins with a first step. For us it began during the reign of Queen Victoria, travelled through wars in Africa and India, two world wars, and several skirmishes and international disputes. During all of this, one thing has remained the same, and that is God. He has never changed, and though we are now small in number, He has never failed us.

As a church we are excited at the completion of our new building but the Bible teaches that the church is not the building. The real church consists of people all over the world who have confessed their failure to keep God's commands, and having asked Him to forgive them have trusted in Jesus as the only way to know peace with God.

Visit www.ebenezer-brighton.co.uk



ELIJAH AT ZAREPHATH [1]

It was a privilege for some of our ladies group to join with others from a wide area at Crawley recently. Pastor Jeff Smith from Coconut Creek, Florida, brought two messages on Elijah and the widow of Zarephath from 1Kings 17. In the first he brought us three vital lessons about the Word of God.

GOD'S WORD SOVEREIGNLY DISCRIMINATES

In God's providence Elijah was sent to a pagan town to an impoverished Gentile widow who did not even have enough for herself. This is a powerful illustration showing God's sovereign choice and prerogative in His dealings with people (Luke 4:24-26). It is also a foretaste of what was to come as God's saving grace would extend to the ends of the earth. We were challenged to consider that as Israel rejected God in the Old Testament and God's grace is despised today, so the Gospel will go elsewhere if we fail to love God and obey Him. The widow woman is also an example of the secret operation of God on the human heart. He had prepared her heart to receive Elijah and God's word which is a great encouragement to us as we may witness and evangelise.

GOD'S WORD MAKES CHALLENGING DEMANDS

As Elijah asks her to bake a cake for him first, she was willing to risk everything and stake everything on God's word and

promise. All was based on the veracity and truthfulness of God. God's word demands from us a similar unconditional trust in Him and obedience as we take up His cross and follow Him wherever He leads. As we venture everything on Christ we can live a life of faith – even to do the unthinkable so that we might receive the impossible.

GOD'S WORD IS CERTAIN OF FULFILMENT

As the widow put everything on the line, God's word was fulfilled and they ate for many days v15. So it will be for all who trust their all to Him. We were challenged to consider our daily dependence on Him for provision and grace. God is training, sanctifying and conforming us to the image of His Son so He keeps us in a condition to continue to trust and look to Him by faith on a daily basis which will ultimately lead us to heaven. As we seek first the kingdom of God and make His will and our obedience to Him our top priority, we can be sure that all good things will be given to us and the 'flour and oil' will not fail every day of our lives.

This was followed by small discussion groups where we considered some questions that had been prepared for us on God's sovereignty in redemptive history, in His plan of salvation and then in its application to our lives. This was a helpful, stimulating and encouraging time for us all followed by continued fellowship over lunch.

As we venture everything on Christ we can live a life of faith – even to do the unthinkable so that we might receive the impossible.

A Provocative Thought...

If our technology had existed in Jesus' day, our Bibles might have read 'Jesus asked His disciples, who do people say that the Son of Man is? but they were checking their e-mail and missed the question'. Or 'a third time He asked him, Simon do you love Me? Peter was hurt that Jesus asked the question a third time, but then his cell phone rang and he replied, I'm sorry Lord, I've got to take this.' Or on Pentecost, 'Peter continued preaching for a long time, and a handful of people believed and were baptized while thousands more texted and sent out tweets on Twitter'.

Technology can stifle our spiritual growth in subtle ways. The first Christians devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, and to fellowship, and to sharing in meals, including the Lord's Supper, and to prayer (Acts 2:42). None of these things come easily in our wired world. Who has the time or discipline to study the apostles' teaching and pray when cable television and the internet

jangle with unimportant yet interesting diversions? Let's face it, our lives would be little changed if we missed that latest score, review, or celebrity gossip. Yet filling our minds with such minutiae comes at some cost, for we may unknowingly project our reading of the virtual world upon the eternal truths of God's Word. When everything is trivial, then anything is trivial.

Fellowship and community are thought to be the strengths of our new media, but busy texters ignore us and intrusive phone calls interrupt us. We often sit in the presence of bodies whose minds are elsewhere.

Lest you think I'm simply a hater of today's technology, ask yourself this:

When the Good Shepherd leads you beside peaceful streams, do you rest in green pastures or reach for your iPhone?

Mike Wittmer (Our Daily Journey)

...and another!

Everybody, Somebody, Anybody and Nobody!

There was an important job to do and Everybody was asked to do it. Everybody was sure that Somebody would do it. Anybody could have done it, but Nobody did it.

Somebody got angry because it was Everybody's job. Everybody thought Anybody would 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 Sunday School Page

" Paul planted, Apollos watered but God gave the increase"

1 Corinthians 3:6

This is the first Sunday School magazine page since the resumption of another Sunday School year. Whenever we begin a new year after a long summer break we wonder whilst we commit the matter to God in prayer which children will return, will there be any new faces and so on.

With this in mind we praise God that after a month or so a good number of children are attending on a regular basis, approximately 14-16, and several of these have never been before and some haven't attended for quite some time.

We thank God for these continued tokens of His goodness and faithfulness and pray that as we seek each Sunday to share the gospel that new children as well as 'old' might come to faith in Christ.

God's goodness, faithfulness and indeed His plenty and provision was very much the theme of our Harvest Service on 10th October. Fifteen children came along with some parents as well. Many thanks to all the church friends that attended as well, please pray that lasting good may have been done.

UPCOMING EVENTS

- ❖ Bowling Outing 13th November
- ❖ Carol Service 19th December

PLEASE PRAY

- ❖ ...that new children would become regular in attendance
- ❖ ...for continued strength, wisdom and zeal for each of the teachers
- ❖ ...that as we sow the seed we may all water it with prayer and God will give the increase.



Hailsham Baptist Church

We extend a warm welcome
to you at all our services

Sunday

Prayer at 10.15am
Worship
11.00am and 6.30pm

Thursday

Bible Study and Prayer
7.30pm

Pastor:

Howard R Sayers
Tel: 01323 841733
e-mail h.sayers@btinternet.com

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Deacons:

Colin Dadswell (Treasurer)
Tel: 01323 442189
e-mail colin.dadswell@btinternet.com

Martin Cook
Tel: 01323 847991

Sunday School Team Leaders:

Martin and Catherine Cook
Tel: 01323 847991
e-mail cook785@btinternet.com

Sunday School

Sunday afternoon
3.00pm

Ladies Fellowship

2nd and 4th Wednesday mornings
10.15am

Coffee Morning and Drop In

Friday mornings between
10.00am and 12 noon

Tots Time

for mothers and toddlers
1st and 3rd Wednesday afternoons
from 1.45pm

Visit our website:

www.hailshambaptistchurch.co.uk