

Feltham Evangelical Church (Newsletter June 2007)

A Bible-based church making known the Christian Faith

Calendar

w/c 27th May

27th 9.30.a.m Lord's Supper
27th 11.00.a.m P Venables
28th 9.00.a.m. Church Outing (see notes below)
30th 7.30.p.m Prayer / Bible Study
1st 9.30.a.m Coffee Morning

w/c 3rd June

3rd 9.30.a.m Lord's Supper (M Mollallegn)
3rd 11.00.a.m P Venables (refreshments afterwards)
5th 5.45.p.m. Lighthouse
6th 7.30.p.m. Prayer / Bible Study
8th 9.30.a.m. Coffee Morning
9th 10.00.a.m. Leaflet Distribution
9th 7.00.p.m. Feltham Bible Focus; D Field (*Why Hell?*)

w/c 10th June

10th 9.30.a.m Lord's Supper
10th 11.00.a.m D Field
10th 1.p.m. Lunch

10th 2.p.m. D Field
11th 8.30.p.m Leadership Meeting
12th 5.45.p.m Lighthouse
13th 7.30.p.m Prayer / Bible Study; G Haglund (*Saints*)
15th 9.30.a.m Coffee Morning

w/c 17th June

17th 9.30.a.m Prayer and Praise
17th 11.00.a.m P Symes (Lord's Supper)
19th 5.45.p.m.Lighthouse
20th 7.30.p.m Prayer / Bible Study
22nd 9.30.a.m Coffee Morning

w/c 24th June

24th 9.30.a.m Lord's Supper
24th 11.00.a.m P Venables
26th 5.45.p.m.Lighthouse
27th 7.30.p.m Prayer / Bible Study
29th 9.30.a.m Coffee Morning

News

Philip Venables is making steady progress in recovering from His operation in April. Another change in his life has come about through him having left his employment in The Valuation Office Agency on May 11th. Pray for Philip and the family as they adjust to different circumstances.

Trish Howard and Daphne Henderson were both formally received into membership of the church on May 20th. Both Trish and Daphne have been active in the church and it is good to formally establish this fellowship in them becoming members. Pray that the LORD will prosper them and their families.

Shegun and Victoria Babalola and family are due to be away in Nigeria for a fortnight from May 26th. Victoria's grandmother has passed away and they are due to attend the funeral.

James Phillips had his knee operation on May 14th. He is now recuperating

Notes

A Fellowship Lunch is set for June 10th. David Field who lectures at Oak Hill Theological College in Southgate, is due to be with us on that day.

Feltham Bible Focus On the previous evening, June 9th Dr Field will be speaking the subject of "Why Hell?" This is a sobering, but necessary subject to consider. Why not make a point of being there so you can have your mind stretched and heart stirred.

Hayes Town Chapel have their anniversary weekend on June 16th/17th. As part of the weekend we are invited to hear Neil Richards from Chester speak on "John Newton – Amazing Grace" on June 16th at 7.00.p.m.

Security On May 20th Abigail Morrison's car was broken into during the morning service. This sad event reminds us of the need to be vigilant and to take care what we leave in our cars when in the car park.

Child Protection Policy. Please note that the church has a copy of this in place in order to provide for the best welfare of children and the church.

Church Outing The outing this year, has now been re-scheduled and is planned for May 28th and the destination is set to be Woodside Animal Farm and Leisure Park near Luton. The admission cost is per person aged 2 to 14 is £3.00 and 15 and overs is £4.00 for entrance to the Park. We plan to travel by mini-bus. Voluntary contributions towards travel expenses will be welcomed according to each person's discretion.

Spiritual Notes How to listen to preaching

If you are reading this newsletter it is highly likely that you regularly listen to preaching. But have you ever asked yourself: "How should I listen to preaching?" Like most people you have your favourite preacher(s) and you probably engage in criticizing the deficiencies of preachers and preaching. However, have you ever thought about your own involvement in the preaching process?

The reality for most of us is that we treat preaching like any other product we consume. We live in a consumerist society after all. And so we buy our food from Tesco's, place it in the oven, and then evaluate how it does or does not match up to our expectations. Such thinking is carried into church. We come as consumers assessing the product that the preacher gives us and then we receive it or reject it according to how much it matches with our expectations. But is this right?

Let us first of all remember what it is that we are receiving; it is the Word of God. The messenger may have his deficiencies and he may not match up to all you want him to be, but if he is faithfully bringing the Word of

the LORD then we need to take heed to what he is bringing to us. Remember what Paul says to the Thessalonians that **when you received the Word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men, but as it actually is, the Word of God, which is at work in you who believe** (1 Thess. 2:13b). This must be our focus when we are listening to the true preaching which brings God's Word.

Moreover, we must not think that we are mere spectators in the theatre with the stage being occupied by the preacher preaching. Rather we are all participants. The preacher has a key role to play, but the hearers also have a key role. The hearers role is different, but no less vital. One of the great preaching events in scripture is when Ezra brought the Word of the God to the people of God in Nehemiah 8:1-8. And in this section we read **He (Ezra) read it aloud from daybreak till noon as he faced the square before the Water Gate in the presence of the men, women and others who could understand. And all the people listened attentively to the Book of the Law** (v3). Let us be similarly attentive when we hear the Word of God preached in church.

When the word is declared then we should have respect for it as the Word of God and we should as a consequence be attentive to the content of the preaching. We have to be aware though that we can transgress in this realm and fail to listen aright. The failure to listen aright is generally due to a failure to prepare aright. We are only too aware that the preacher needs to prepare aright, but the parable of the sower reminds us of the need for us **all** to prepare our hearts to receive the word.

Let us then look at the parable in Luke 8:4-15. The significant thing for ourselves here is the parallelism which sees the different types of ground as the different conditions of heart. We are left in no doubt about the appropriateness of this comparison when we are told immediately in the explanation of the parable by our LORD that **"the seed is the word of God"** (11b). The different types of ground / hearts then are:

- The wayside hearer (v5 and v12) is the hard-hearted hearer. The Word is not received into the heart and so Satan can immediately come and snatch it away so there is no benefit from hearing the Word. The hard hearted listener is someone who has made no attempt to break up the ground of his heart through repentance and prayer to our LORD and God. There is no sense of God and no sense of the importance of His Word. So is the reason we sometimes say that *"I got nothing out of that"* because we did not prepare our hearts to receive? If such is the case Satan then comes and makes sure we receive nothing
- The rocky ground hearer (v6 and v13) is the one who is casual about the "rocks" that they allow to remain in their lives. These rocks take the form of other priorities. So they initially are thrilled with the word. But not having dealt with the idols, which stem from other priorities, they rapidly drift into their old ways.
- The thorny ground hearer (v7 and v14) is the one who is casual. They respond to the word of God in an *"I-can-take-it-or-leave-it"* manner. Accordingly when the normal issues of life; cares, riches and pleasures, come upon them they soon forget the word.
- Finally, we come to the good ground hearers (v8 and v15). These are those who have prepared hearts. They come having prayed to hear God speaking through His word. God is their priority and they want the Word in their lives to carry them on in their lives. Oh how important it is that we come to church with good ground hearts and then we can know God prospering our lives with a plentiful spiritual reward.

In receiving God's Word, though, we have to realize that there is a need to retain our critical faculties. There is need to consider what we hear, Accordingly we read in Acts 17:11 how **the Bereans were of more noble character than the Thessalonians, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true.** The Bereans even put the apostle Paul through their "check-it-out" machine. We must do the same. No preacher is infallible and we must always check out what we hear to make sure that it is in accord with God's Word.

We must be aware also that when we are in church how we affect other people. Accordingly, our conduct during the preaching of God's Word is very important. We can put others off listening to the Word by our annoying habits as we sit and listen. But, on the contrary, we encourage others to be attentive to the things of God by our own attentiveness. Remember love puts others before ourselves.

Finally, let us remind ourselves that Satan is aware of the importance of the Word of God being heard aright. Accordingly he does all in his power to hinder this process. It is intriguing to notice that after the first giving of the Word of God in Gen. 2, Satan was immediately busy seeking to undermine the truth as he says to Eve **Did God really say, "You must not eat from any tree in the garden'?"** (Gen. 3:1). So as James says **submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you** (James 4:7).

Let us then be careful and thoughtful about our participation in the great work of God's Word being heard. Let us pray for ourselves, let us pray for each other and let us pray for the preacher that God might be glorified as we hear God's Word together.