

Feltham Evangelical Church (Newsletter August 2007)

A Bible-based church making known the Christian Faith

Calendar

w/c 29th July

29th 9.30.a.m Lord's Supper
29th 11.00.a.m. Morning Service (Philip Venables)
1st (August) 7.30.p.m Prayer / Bible Study
3rd 9.30.a.m Coffee Morning

w/c 5th August

5th 9.30.a.m Lord's Supper
5th 11.00.a.m Morning Service (Philip Venables)
(refreshments afterwards)
8th 7.30.p.m. Prayer / Bible Study
10th 9.30.a.m. Coffee Morning
14th 10.00.a.m. Leaflet Distribution
11th 7.00.p.m. Feltham Bible Focus; Philip Venables (*Does God heal today?*)

w/c 12th August

12th 9.30.a.m Lord's Supper (Dan Walker)
12th 11.00.a.m Morning Service (Philip Venables)

12th 1.p.m. Lunch
12th 2.p.m. Afternoon Service (Dan Walker)
13th 8.30.p.m Leadership Meeting
15th 7.30.p.m Prayer / Bible Study
17th 9.30.a.m Coffee Morning

w/c 19th August

19th 9.30.a.m Prayer and Praise
19th 11.00.a.m. Morning Service with Lord's Supper (Philip Venables)
22nd 7.30.p.m Prayer / Bible Study (Phil Symes)
24th 9.30.a.m Coffee Morning

w/c 26th August

26th 9.30.a.m Lord's Supper
26th 11.00.a.m. Morning Service (Philip Venables)
29th 7.30.p.m Prayer / Bible Study
31st 9.30.a.m Coffee Morning

News

Bob Roaf has now moved to Bournemouth. We wish him every blessing from the LORD in his new situation. See also notes below.

Philip Venables has taken on a new position working with Dunphy's, Chartered Surveyors based in Hounslow.

Notes

A Fellowship Lunch is due to take place on August 12th. Dan Walker from Amyand Park Chapel is due to be preaching with us on that day.

Feltham Bible Focus This month on August 11th we deal with the controversial, but nevertheless, very important subject of "Does God Heal Today?" Philip Venables from our own church will be speaking on this occasion.

Lighthouse reached the end of a further year on July 17th with the Parents Evening. With Bob moving away this leads to challenges as regards to the "manning" of this work. Let us bring all to our Father as we thank Him for the ongoing opportunity to spread the Word to youngsters in the Community.

Dedication Service As part of the morning service on August 5th we have the opportunity to give thanks for the safe delivery of Ashlee Onwuemena and also to commit her, and her parents, Chucks and Chinwe, to the LORD. Celebratory refreshments will then be served after the service.

Sunday School During August there will be no Sunday school during the morning service. The teachers, Sheila Hume, Trish Howard, Daphne Henderson and Diana Buah are taking a well-earned rest. Please continue to bring your children to the services though so that they can learn of our God in the service.

Bob's Leaving On July 29th we plan to give Bob a send-off with "coffee and cake" together (and with him) after the morning service.

Spiritual Notes God helps those who help themselves

This is one of those phrases that people think is in the Bible, but actually is NOT. However, because it is used so very often it is helpful to stop and ponder upon whether or not it actually reflects biblical truth. Does God help those who help themselves? Remember it is to the Bible that we have to turn in order to assess whether or not a statement is correct or not.

The crucial issue to remember in deliberating upon God's help for human beings is that of whether or not people have the ability to perform the required tasks. Quite simply if we have the ability to help ourselves then we are expected by God to use that ability for His glory. However, before we substantiate this statement (which we hope to do next month) it is useful to look at the situation of those who cannot help themselves.

Help for the Helpless

Our God is a God who delights to help the helpless. In fact the whole history of God's redemption story is about Him helping the helpless. How does this work? When it comes to our eternal standing before God we

are all helpless. But the wonderful truth is that God helps the helpless. This is the great story of salvation. The theological term which describes our natural state when looked at in the context of salvation is "total inability". We are totally unable to save ourselves. We are utterly helpless.

Paul in Eph. 2:1-4 most profoundly expresses our helplessness. Our state is described as follows:

As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath.

Into that situation of utter helplessness God came and, continuing in Eph. 2:4-5, **because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved.**

The overall theme of God's grace is expressed by Paul in Rom 5. **You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly** (v5). And further in that chapter **God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us** (v8).

Whenever we remember our salvation we remember how God in Christ came and helped us in all our helplessness and powerlessness. We were dead in trespasses and sins and He came and brought us eternal life. Praise be His Name.

It is so important that we remember that we are helpless before as regards to obtaining His salvation. So many people go wrong at this point. So many are seeking to help themselves to gain acceptance with God in the vain hope that God will reward their strivings by granting salvation'. People think of salvation as them doing their part and God doing His part. No No No; this is utterly wrong and leads to us placing ourselves in eternal peril. No amount of good works, penance or self-sacrifice can help us to earn salvation. Salvation is not earned it is received as a gift.

God's Character

In looking at God's workings in salvation we are entering into the heart of our loving Father. **He is the One who is A father to the fatherless, a defender of widows, is God in his holy dwelling** (Psalm 68:5). He ever helps those who cannot help themselves. He is a caring God. This is what our God is eternally like.

A beautiful illustration of God helping the helpless is found in David's actions towards Mephibosheth in 2 Sam. 9. Mephibosheth was the grandson of Saul and lame on both feet. Accordingly, he was connected with the fallen, discredited regime and he was unable to provide for himself. Such is our condition. In Adam we are connected to one who is fallen and discredited and we being dead in our sins are utterly unable to provide salvation for ourselves. Whereas David was now all-powerful, being King over all Israel (see 2 Sam 8:15-18). Marvelously David then moves to bring the helpless Mephibosheth to be fully provided for and permanently accepted at his table (see 2 Sam. 9:13). And therein is a lovely illustration of how God has brought us, as Christians, to be eternally welcome in His presence. Oh the riches of His grace!

Our Character

And we of course should be like Him. We, as God's people, should be godly. In the Old Testament God's covenant people were taught to help the helpless. The law is filled with this teaching. For example: Deut. 24:19 says **When you are harvesting in your field and you overlook a sheaf, do not go back to get it. Leave it for the alien, the fatherless and the widow, so that the LORD your God may bless you in all the work of your hands.** We are reflecting the character of our God within us when we act to help those who cannot help themselves.

And in the New Testament. James encourages us to help the helpless when he writes: **Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress.** (James 1:27). Let us help the helpless.

Thanksgivings then should come from our hearts as we remember that God helps the helpless. Next month we hope to look at the parallel truth that God blesses those who help themselves.

