

Feltham Evangelical Church *Newsletter: October 2008*
A Bible-based church making known the Christian Faith
Calendar

w/c 28th September

28th 9.30.a.m Lord's Supper
 28th 11.00.a.m. Morning Service (David Legg)
 28th 11.20.a.m. Sunday School
 30th 5.45.p.m. Lighthouse
 1st 7.30.p.m. Prayer / Bible Study
 3rd 9.30.a.m "Open House"
 4th 10.30.a.m. Open Air

w/c 5th October

5th 9.30.a.m Lord's Supper
 5th 11.00.a.m. Morning Service (Philip Venables)
 5th 11.20.a.m. Sunday School
 7th 5.45.p.m. Lighthouse
 8th 7.30.p.m Prayer / Bible Study
 10th 9.30.a.m "Open House"
 11th 7.00.p.m. Feltham Bible Focus; Peter Mead (What is God Like?)

w/c 12th October

12th 9.30.a.m Lord's Supper (Phil Symes)
 12th 11.00.a.m. Harvest Service (Phil Symes)
 12th 1.p.m. Fellowship Lunch

12th 2.00.p.m. Afternoon Service (Philip Venables)
 14th 5.45.p.m. Lighthouse
 15th 7.30.p.m Prayer / Bible Study
 17th 9.30.a.m "Open House"

w/c 19th October

19th 9.30.a.m Prayer and Praise
 19th 11.00.a.m. Morning Service (Philip Venables) with Lord's Supper
 19th 11.20.a.m. Sunday School
 21st 5.45.p.m. Lighthouse
 22nd 7.30.p.m Prayer / Bible Study
 24th 9.30.a.m "Open House"
 25th 8.30.a.m. Autumn Clear-up
 25th 12.30.p.m. Church Members "Agape"

w/c 26th October

26th 9.30.a.m Lord's Supper
 26th 11.00.a.m. Morning Service (Andy Osgood)
 26th 11.20.a.m. Sunday School
 29th 7.30.p.m. Prayer / Bible Study
 31st 9.30.a.m "Open House"
 1st (Nov) 10.30.a.m. Open Air

News

Stan and Virginia Nyas are due to move away in the near future to be close to their daughter in Weymouth. This will allow Virginia to have more care in a residential home there.

Nihuska, Daniel and Stephanie Villegas are due to return to Venezuela on September 30th.

Notes

Feltham Bible Focus continues this month on October 11th when we welcome Peter Mead who works with Operation Mobilization. His subject is "What is God Like?"

Autumn clear-up. On The morning of 25th October (from 8.30.a.m.) we intend to clear up the grounds of the church premises. Amyand Park Chapel have kindly offered to lend assistance. If you are able to assist then that would be good.

Harvest If you would like to bring some produce to be displayed in church for harvest then please make sure it is at the church by 9.30.a.m. on 11th October. All the collected provisions will be distributed to the local Age Concern operation. The collection / offering on October 12th will be passed to Pastor Jayakanth Selvaraja to assist in the work of the gospel in Sri Lanka.

Church Members "Agape" On October 25th Philip invites all church members to join together for an "agape" (fellowship lunch) at the church premises at 12.30.p.m..

Flowers If you would like to contribute towards the flowers which are displayed in the church then please write your name on the list in the entrance hall and then make sure you pass your money to Trish at the appropriate time.

Elders / deacons Philip is still the sole elder of the church with no deacons. This is not an ideal situation! Let us pray for the Lord's provision of elders and deacons to be provided in the church, so that we might move forward, as a church, for the LORD.

Welcome Cards Comfort Kalu has taken on responsibility for distributing these cards among those who have recently moved into new homes in the area. Pray for Comfort in this ministry. Also pray that we will see fruit from this work in people coming to the church, but more importantly finding the Lord as Saviour.

Spiritual Notes *Persecution*

According to the testimony of scripture and historical records the normal experience of the church is to experience persecution from the world. The experience of the people of God in the UK over the past two centuries has, therefore, been somewhat abnormal. However, the atmosphere is changing and Christians are increasingly being marginalised and ridiculed. The anti-God, anti Christ, anti-Christian teachings that are becoming more embedded in people's thinking are bringing this about. So how are we to respond? The church at Smyrna was a church undergoing vicious persecution and so their experience is helpful for preparing us to undergo persecution. Their story is told in Revelation 2:8-11.

- *We need to focus on our Saviour (v8)*. In the journey of faith we should always be looking at our Saviour. In Hebrews 12:2-3 we are exhorted to **fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.** Similarly the persecuted Christians in Smyrna, who faced death for their faith, needed to know that there is a Saviour who has conquered death. He is the living one who was once dead. Moreover they needed to know that their LORD is outside of time. They were about to pass away. But they knew a Saviour who would never pass away; He is eternal. He is the First and the Last. So let us focus on an eternal Saviour who is always there for us.
- *He knows our circumstances (v9a)*. He knows all about our situations, Sometimes we think nobody knows what I am going through. But let us remind ourselves that He always knows. The sufferings were known to Him. Their lack of money was known to Him. But the LORD gives them a beautiful reminder that they, although poor financially, actually had a vast spiritual wealth in Christ.
This reminds us that in this age the blessings of God are primarily known spiritually. So Paul tells the Ephesians of the God **who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ** (Eph 1:3b). In the Old Testament for the people of God of that day, Israel, the blessings were primarily earthly and physical. But for us today the blessings are in heaven and are spiritual. Therefore we know that God is with someone not through the prospering of their bank accounts, but through the prospering of their souls.
- *He knows the opposition (v9b)*. It must have been a shock to the Smyrnans to find that the professing people of God, the Jews, were the ones slandering them with vicious words. The Lord says He knows all about this and that these Jews are not really the people of God. In fact the place where they meet is not in any sense God's place, but is the place of the enemy of God, Satan. This is a sobering reminder that it is often the religious who lead the way in opposing God's people. Religious people hate those who have a living faith in the living God.
- *We should not be afraid (v10a)*. The Lord encourages us to not have fear about what is ahead. This is not some vain platitude. Rather it has meaning because of what the Lord has already said to these Christians in Smyrna. Our Saviour is the eternal death conqueror who knows all about us and our circumstances. Therefore we should not be afraid of whatever sufferings come our way.
- *The devil hates us (v10b)*. He wants to bring us down. He wants us to deny our faith. So he throws us into prison and takes us through severe persecution. However, let us be encouraged that Satan's open-season has a fixed time. Ten days is the limit. This may or may not be literal. But whichever we are encouraged to know that it is of limited duration. It has an end.
- *We must keep trusting (v10c)*. Whilst the devil is seeking to destroy our faith God is using such trials to strengthen our faith. Accordingly, the urgings from heaven are that we must continue to be faithful. To keep trusting even if it means giving up our lives because of our testimony for God. Death may come to our bodies, but there is the promise of the reward of a crown; a victory garland which is full of life and that forever.
- *The true Christian has eternal life (v11b)*. Of course many in such situations will become apostate; they will turn away from God. However, for those who remain faithful there is the reminder that although the first death, physical, may take them; the second death eternal hell can never take them. We must say here, though, that none of us knows how we will respond under such intense pressure. We remember Archbishop Cranmer in the sixteenth century, who signed a statement denying his faith. But God enabled Him to repent so that he boldly went to endure the burning flames of fire from the pyre provided by his persecutors. And as he went to his death in Oxford, he put his right hand which had signed the denial into the flames first of all.

In the light of what may be potentially ahead for ourselves let us strengthen ourselves in the LORD. Let us now become so overwhelmed with passion for our Saviour so that we are prepared to stand fast in that day. Remember each one of us individually must take heed this is what the LORD says. We must each be ready to be faithful unto death.