



February/March 2016

Greetings

I am constantly reminded of the command of Jesus when He said "Love one another as I have loved you" and that love was very evident when I attended the first W.A. Meeting of another year. The love shared and the joy and fellowship enjoyed, was something special and God desires that for each one of us in this year of 2016. As we love and serve Him, He makes us more like Jesus by our actions and forgiveness.

During the war in Kosovo in 1999, three Americans were captured and held hostage for more than a month. After negotiations, a breakthrough occurred and the prisoners were allowed to go free. Roy Lloyd was part of the delegation that secured their release. He reported, "Each of the three young soldiers were very religious. One of

them, Christopher Stone, would not leave until he was allowed to go back to the soldier who had served as his guard and pray for him.

Here was a young man who knew something about the principles of Jesus. He could have resented his circumstances and hated his captors. He could have developed a bitter, vengeful spirit. He could have carried a burning rage out of that difficulty. But following the command of Jesus (Mat 5.44) and the example of Paul and Silas in Philippi (Acts 16.25-34), he forgave his captor and ministered to him.

In a world where retaliation is common, believers are called to be different. We are to pray for our persecutors, forgive them, and minister to them. Jesus' principles for His followers are

challenging, but with the help of the Holy Spirit who lives in us, we can choose to have a forgiving spirit. Pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you. (Math 5. 44).

We are never more Christ-like than when we choose to forgive and the One who had to forgive the most was our Saviour as He hung on the cross of Calvary and cried out, "Father forgive them, they know not what they do". Let us be more like Him day by day.

God Bless you.

Ron Percival

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Special points of interest:

- *Welsh Translations*
- *Women's Sunday details*
- *The Announcement*
- *Easter (yes, already!)*
- *New Year Resolutions?*
- *Fellowship Evening*

Visiting Preachers

The preachers for our services are:

February

7th am—Mr.D.Hill

7th pm— Mrs.C.Ormerod #

14th am— Mr.D.McDonald

14th pm— Mr.D.McDonald

21st am— Mr.R.Peers #

21st pm— Fellowship Evening

28th am— Mr.R.Stone

28th pm— Mrs.S.Gleave

March

6th am—Mr.I.Delooze

6th pm— Mr.G.Lomas #

13th am— Mrs.D.Helsby

13th pm— Mrs.M.Atkinson

20th am— Mr.R.Povey #

20th pm— Mr.K.Irwin

27th am— Mr.D.McDonald

27th pm— Mr.L.Atherton

Morning services start at 10.45, evening services at 6.00

Services marked # are sacramental services

The 13th March will be the day of our Women's Sunday services. Easter services will be on the last weekend of March.

What's On

Our regular meetings (all in the church's schoolroom unless otherwise stated) consist of:

Prayer Meeting & Bible

Study—Wednesday evening 7.30 onwards with the Bible Study starting at approximately 8.15.

Boomerang (for school-age kids) & crèche (for little

ones)—Runs as part of the Sunday morning service from 10.45 onwards till approximately 12 noon. This facility is provided on an as required basis.

Men's Fellowship—The meeting is usually held on the third Tuesday of each month, 7.30pm. There are usually guest speakers—announced in

the notices each month. Details are usually available from Lester Atherton.

Women's Auxiliary— The WA usually meet each week on Thursdays at 2.30pm. The meetings in February and early March will be used as choir practices for Women's Sunday.

Focus

As many of you are aware, if everything goes to plan, we will be moving house in the very near future. The house we are moving to is an unusual one and it comes with a host of interesting features. Sadly, by order of the council one of those features has to be removed, or at least greatly altered. At the front of the house there is a very high wall and the council has ruled that the wall needs to be reduced in size, partly to allow a

new entrance to the property. Within the wall, over the gate, there is a stone lintel. And when the wall is partially removed that lintel is going to be preserved and moved and will become part of a new building which will be put up next door. So why is that particular lintel so important that it needs to be saved and included in the new house next door? Well, it has an inscription carved into it. And the inscription is in Welsh. It is

this: "Heb Dduw Heb Ddim". And translated into English it means this: "Without God, Without anything". In other words, if you do not have God, then you have nothing. Or, if you are without God, you are without everything that matters.

Why this inscription is carved into the stone over the gate is a mystery. The words Heb Dduw, Heb

Ddim are actually part of the motto that appears on the Jones family coat of arms. So it is possible, I suppose, that the architect or the first resident in the house was called Jones. It might be that a God-fearing Welshman lived there who was not called Jones but knew of the Jones family motto and decided to enshrine it into the fabric of the property as a reminder and encouragement. We will likely never know as even those who have cared for the property over the years do not seem to know how or why the inscription is there.

If you walk down Station Road in Padgate, across the road from the school, you can see a gate in the wall and above it you can see the inscription. But if you want to see it for yourself, you had better be quick because, all being well, it will be removed in the not-too-distant future in accordance with the Council's orders.

But I am not writing this to discuss our house move or the vagaries of local Council planning, but I do want to spend a short while thinking about that inscription. The words "Without God, Without Anything" have intrigued me and they remind of those great words of Paul's in Philippians 'My God shall supply all my needs according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus'. Although the promise made in those words is wonderful it is also challenging. Can it really be taken exactly as it appears—ALL my needs? Physical, material, emotional, medical, financial or is it referring only to spiritual needs? Well there are many indications throughout the Bible that God's

provision is to cover many aspects of our needs; we are encouraged in the Lord's Prayer to ask for our daily bread so His provision includes food. In the sermon on the mount Jesus says 'See the lilies of the field, they toil not neither do they spin yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these'. The message here is simple—do not worry about your clothing, God will provide. Of course that does not mean that food and clothing is somehow going to appear magically—but God's provision is abundant and the world is full of the riches and resources which he has made available to us. There is plenty and sufficient to clothe and feed us all.

But of course it is our spiritual needs that are served most deeply and not merely served, but God's provision is so great in this respect that according to Paul, He is able to provide for us spiritually to such an extent and in so many ways that they are beyond our imagining. In Ephesians 3v20 Paul says that our heavenly Father 'is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us'. All of that sounds wonderful and as Christians we should be thrilled and thankful in equal measure that God's grace is so rich and free to us all. But there is a big challenge within all of this because there is evidence, that we see every day, that in the lives of individual Christians and in the Church as a whole, there is need: the needs of people and the needs of the church. So what can be the explanation for this? I think there may be two things. The first is that the needs are already provided for but somehow the blessings sup-

plied by God's grace are not being allowed to show—we somehow stifle them, perhaps we feel unsure that we are able to show and share the joy, the love, the peace, that comes with it. And the second reason is that perhaps our faith is part of the problem. We believe that God can and does supply for His people but somehow it is a belief that is not confident enough to take what is on offer. As the young man said to Jesus "Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief". It is perfectly OK to feel that your faith is not strong enough—the solution is a simple one, ask God to strengthen our faith.

There is one other clue offered in Psalm 84 where it says 'No good thing does He withhold from those who walk uprightly.' So there may also be a kind of condition involved as well—God will not hold anything back from someone who walks uprightly. And it is a really interesting Psalm to read with regard to this question because it talks about the riches of God's blessings and clearly indicates that they are found in their greatest abundance when we are closest to God. The Psalmist seems to have a hunger to be in God's presence that overwhelms all other aspects of his life. The message is a simple one—walk closely with God and his blessings will increase, What a wonderful thing that is—because it means that is not down to a choice that our heavenly Father might make, to give or withhold that blessing. No, he has already decided that it is simply there and it is stronger when we are closest to Him.

Special Events

Fellowship Evening—On Sunday 21st February we will be holding our annual Fellowship Evening at 6.00pm. This is the event when each part of the Church takes part, so it promises to be special. Please advertise and invite family and friends.

Women Sunday—On Sunday

13th March the Women's Auxiliary Anniversary Services will be held at 10.45am when the Speaker will be Denise Helsby. The evening Service is at 6.0pm when the Speaker will be Moira Atkinson. There will be special singing by the Ladies Choir. Please advertise this and invite family and friends.

Easter Services—On Friday 25th March there will be a Good Friday morning Service at 11.00am and of course our regular morning and evening services on Easter Day itself.

Prayer Requests

Your prayers are requested for the various members of our congregation and wider community who are ill and infirm, suffering loss and bereavement, or struggling with hard-

ship at the moment.

A reminder too that the charities and groups that we support — Warrington Food Bank, Barnabus, NorthEast Help-Link, Warrington Youth For

Christ and its work at our local high school—all need our on-going prayerful and financial support.

David's Dialogue—Free To Change

**Now the Lord is the Spirit,
and where the Spirit of the
Lord is there is freedom.**

**And we all, who with un-
veiled faces contemplate
the Lord's glory, are being
transformed into his image
with ever-increasing glory,
which comes from the
Lord, who is the Spirit.**

**2 Corinthians 3 verses 17 –
18.**

So far as we can tell, people have habitually marked the

beginnings of New Years. And the resolve at such times to "do better" goes back at least to Ancient Babylon. Something about the turn of the calendar carries with it a pervasive and powerful desire for a fresh start, a clean slate.

Approximately 50% of us make resolutions each New Year, most of them to do with becoming healthier, managing money, and im-

proving ourselves – all of which are significant. And yet research confirms that we already suspect perhaps from personal experience – that the majority of us will abandon our resolves by mid – January, with many of us not taking it beyond the first week.

Still, the making of resolutions at least implies a felt – need for transformation of some kind, a need that Chris-

tians of all people should understand. That need, and our failure to meet it, is addressed supremely in the gospel, which declares that the heart of the Christian faith is not mere potential for self – improvement, still less the need to secure “Salvation” through following a certain “code”, but *freedom* – leaving us free from the pressure of having to do things to gain favour with God, free from trying to prove ourselves to others, free to submit to Christ, free to change and be changed.

The gospel not only explains the need for change, but also provides the power to bring it about, a power which comes from the finished work of Christ on the cross, from who God is and what he has done, with the Spirit as the agent of transformation in our lives.

It would be tempting to imagine such change could only happen in special moments of focused, determined effort, or when we’re able to lay aside cares, with plenty of time at our disposal. Like most of us, those to

whom Paul wrote to had no such luxury. Transformation happens not by withdrawing from everyday life but by walking in step with the Spirit in everyday life, - at work, at home, and elsewhere. The freedom we enjoy as Christians allows change not just in the fresh resolves we sometimes make at this time of year, but in consistent, everyday habits and actions bound up with our lifelong process of transformation into the likeness of Christ through the ongoing work of the Spirit.

Additional Notices

Monthly Collection—our collection this month is for Barnabus but rather than the usual tinned food, clothing and toiletries instead we are collecting cash and cheques which can be put into ye collecting box at the back of chapel or given directly to Alison our treasurer.

Newsletter—please send contributions for the Newsletter to James. We are always short of suitable articles—photos, jokes,

poems, recipes, anything within reason will do and whatever they are, we can use them. Your contribution will help make this Newsletter a happier and fuller place. Items sent by e-mail are best as they are easiest to copy into the Newsletter, but hand-written articles are just as welcome. Please help out!

The Final Word

Many thanks to the various contributors this month:

Onboard Announcement

This is your Captain speaking. On behalf of my crew I would like to welcome you aboard flight 602 from New York to London. We are currently flying at a height of 35,000 feet midway across the Atlantic. If you look out of the windows on the starboard side of the aircraft you will observe that the starboard engine is on fire. If you look out of the window on the portside, you will observe that the portside engine is on fire. If you look down towards the Atlantic Ocean, you will see a little yellow life raft with three people in it waving at you. That's me, the co-pilot, and our flight attendant. This is a recording.

A Bit Of A Wrench

A mechanic who worked out at home, had a dog named Mace. Mace had a bad habit of eating all the grass on the mechanic's lawn, so the mechanic had to keep Mace inside. The grass eventually became overgrown. One day the mechanic was working on a car in his back garden and dropped his wrench, losing it in the tall grass. He couldn't find it, so he decided to call it a day. That night Mace escaped from the house and ate all the grass in the garden. The next morning the mechanic went outside and saw his wrench glinting in the sunlight. Realising what had happened, he looked up to the heavens and proclaimed, "A GRAZING MACE, HOW SWEET THE HOUND

THAT SAVED A WRENCH FOR ME"

When I Say I Am A Christian

When I say, "I am a Christian"
I'm not shouting, "I've been saved!"
I'm whispering, "I get lost!
That's why I chose this way".

When I say, "I am a Christian"
I don't speak with human pride
I'm confessing that I stumble -
Needing God to be my guide

When I say, "I am a Christian"
I'm not trying to be strong
I'm professing that I'm weak
And pray for strength to carry on.

When I say, "I am a Christian"
I'm not bragging of success
I'm admitting that I've failed
And cannot ever pay the debt.

When I say, "I am a Christian"
I don't think I know it all
I submit to my confusion
Asking humbly to be taught.

When I say, "I am a Christian"
I'm not claiming to be perfect
My flaws are all too visible
But God believes I'm worth it.

When I say, "I am a Christian"
I still feel the sting of pain
I have my share of heartache,
Which is why I seek His name.

When I say, "I am a Christian"
I do not wish to judge
I have no authority...
I only know I'm loved

Where's The Post Office?

Reverend Billy Graham tells of a time early in his ministry when he arrived in a small town to preach a sermon. Wanting to post a letter, he asked a young boy where the post office was. When the boy had told him, Dr. Graham thanked him and said, 'If you'll come to the Baptist Church this evening, you can hear me telling everyone how to get to heaven.'

The boy replied, 'I don't think I'll be there... You don't even know your way to the post office.'

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April/May

To be published as near to the first weekend in April as possible.
Articles and contributions by the last Friday in March please.