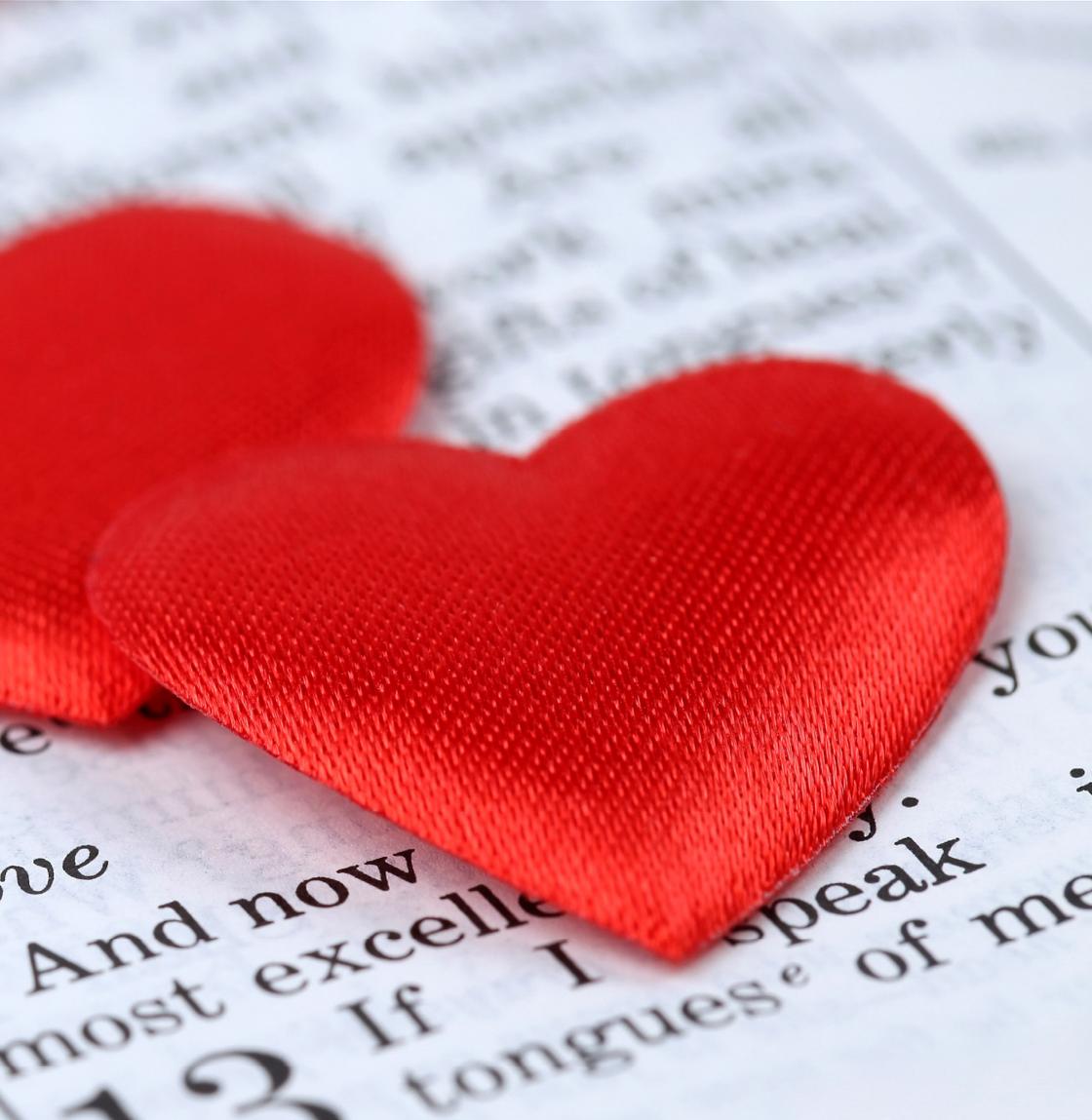


TIME TO SHARE



GREAT BADDOW TEAM MINISTRY

“The Holy Spirit is the ultimate evangelist,
constantly pointing people to Jesus.
As we step out in dependence on him
and follow his small promptings,
he teaches us how to reach people.”

Robby Dawkins

INTRODUCTION

Evangelism; I have heard it put this way - 'It's about a starving person who found bread telling others where to find it too!'

I love good news, I love hearing it when others are telling of it and I cannot stop talking about it when I have some. As Christians, this is all we are asked to do; to share some Good News and spread goodness and cheer all around us.

However, bad news seems to dominate the modern world. To confirm this reality all you have to do is listen to the radio or TV news, read the press or just walk up the street before someone you meet starts telling you about their woes, personal trouble and the problems of our world.

Research was carried out on a colony of ravens; a few members of this colony were introduced to a source of food, while others were excluded. The next day those who were introduced to the food came back and others joined them. The following day those who came on the second day returned with more joining them still, and so it went on day after day until all the members of the colony had found the food source. When the data was analysed the researchers found that all the newcomers were those who perched in close proximity to those who had already found the food - even among the ravens!

The Christian is called to be a carrier of Christ and his Good News wherever he or she goes. This in itself has the capacity to transform all around us, but we need to be confident in the news we have.

The study that we have before us, which we hope you will truly connect with and enjoy, is intended to equip us to identify the actual Good News that we have and how to more confidently share it with others.

This year is designated as a mission year for our Diocese and churches. Therefore, we want to be fully engaged with it as each of us has so much to offer. So, read on, get equipped and inspired and gossip the good news of Jesus.

'I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger...' John 6:35

Revd Mones Farah

Part 1

Personal Evangelism

How did Jesus set an example?

Days 1 - 5

How did the disciples set an example?

Days 6 - 8

DAY 1 - GREAT EXPECTATIONS

Matthew 4:18-19 - While walking by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon (who is called Peter) and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea, for they were fishermen. And he said to them, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men."

What do we see? We may see people as they are, fixed in their ways. Perhaps we don't expect their nature or attitudes to change. But it was not so with Jesus. He saw potential in two ordinary working men. He would give them a new beginning, turn them into people changers, movers and shakers in their world. Were they up for it? Indeed they were!

Where do we walk? We could be doing the shopping, exercising or busy with errands. Wherever Jesus went he had time for those he met, with something worth giving them.

What can we offer? When we see others, do we engage with them or simply pass the time of day? William Carey, a missionary in India, called for people to give up their small ambitions, go abroad and proclaim Christ.

Paul wrote in Romans 11:33 - *'Oh the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways!'* It was worth it for Peter and Andrew to leave behind their father, boat, income and security. *'See, we have left everything and followed you'*, Peter later declared (Matthew 19:27). Jesus wants to train us for the Kingdom of Heaven, to be like a householder who brings out of his treasure store what is new and what is old.

DAY 2 - LOOKING UP

John 3:2-3 - "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher come from God, for no one can do these signs that you do unless God is with him." Jesus answered him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God."

'I believe Jesus to be the Son of God. I believe in miracles.' That's good, we say, you are one of us. Wait, says Jesus, there is something missing. You are a teacher and don't know what you are talking about. You are a witness but have nothing to report.

If we hide our past secrets, fearing discovery, exposure, shame and punishment, can we begin again, when there are stains which seem not to go away and guilt that haunts us? How can an old man be born again?

It isn't easy to understand this teaching. It is however a matter of life and death. Nicodemus knew about good and evil, he knew about God's love. But now he meets the real Teacher, who explains for him the path of forgiveness, restoration and life. He is reminded of a plague of deadly snakes and the miraculous healing that came to all who looked up for deliverance. In the same way Jesus the Son of God would die, and so bring life to all who look to him in faith.

Though Nicodemus slipped away that night and we are not told of his immediate response, he later spoke up for Jesus. He remained when the disciples fled, and helped take Jesus' body from the cross. Jesus was hung up in death to draw all people to himself. Nicodemus saw and believed - an old man born for the second time. Like little children and the dying thief in Mark 10:14, he belonged in God's kingdom.

DAY 3 - A THIRST QUENCHING EXPERIENCE

John 4:13-15 - Jesus said to her, "Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life." The woman said to him, "Sir, give me this water, so that I will not be thirsty or have to come here to draw water."

Let us today bring to God those difficult areas in our lives that we have lived with for a long time and that have almost become a part of us. Let us ask for a fresh expectancy in our lives that we may pass this on to others.

Christians have something different about them. I remember a group of people in my teenage years that I was drawn to; I wanted to be with them, to be like them. They were followers of Christ and through their love I soon became one too. What is it that they had? Jesus describes it as a spring of water continuously bubbling up within - a spring of the Holy Spirit where all the fruits of the Holy Spirit dwell. All the love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control that we need for every situation we face. What a glorious spring that never fails us or runs dry.

It is this living water that satisfies and that alone will draw others to Christ. Let us, with the woman at the well cry, *'Sir, give me this water'*; and let each of us hear Jesus' faithful promise in his response, *'The water I give you will become in you a spring of water'*. Such is the spring that Jesus gives us that it bubbles up and overflows. It is a beautiful, powerful spring not of ourselves but flowing from the very heart of God. It is this alone that brings a thirst to those around us and this alone that will quench that thirst.

DAY 4 - THE UNCONDITIONAL CALL

Matthew 9:9 - As Jesus passed on from there, he saw a man called Matthew sitting at the tax booth, and he said to him, "Follow me." And he rose and followed him.

With insight, we might appreciate the times when life is good, for as the old adage goes, 'nothing good lasts forever'. It's easy to imagine how a disciple of Jesus, witnessing those stunning miracles and huge crowds, could have believed this is as good as it gets and their thinking may have gone a bit like this:

'Please, let this last forever...

But what is Jesus doing now? Talking to a tax gatherer? Probably about 'sin', I expect. I'll keep my distance in case people think Matthew is a friend of mine.

What? No...surely he's not inviting that toe-rag to join us? Matthew is a traitor! He should have his head shaved as a badge of shame, like they do to those who dally with occupying forces. He works for THEM, Jesus. Why do we want this undesirable, who will lose us all credibility?

Oh, Jesus, why do you do this? What we had going was so good. Now you've spoiled it.

Yes, my heart understands Matthew deserves his chance with you, but the rest of me wants nothing to do with him.

Alright, I'll try to move on. I know nothing good lasts forever...well, except for your goodness, and your love. Oh, and your mercy and your hand of friendship.

Oh...and that moment you called me...'

DAY 5 - HAVE CONFIDENCE IN TRUTH

Read John 18:33-38 (see Appendix)

Key verses: 18:37-38 - Then Pilate said to him, "So you are a king?" Jesus answered, "You say that I am a king. For this purpose I was born and for this purpose I have come into the world—to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice." Pilate said to him, "What is truth?"

Pilate got it all so wrong. He looks at Jesus and asks, '*What is truth?*'. The problem is, he asked him the wrong question. You see, standing in front of Pilate was truth itself. The question that Pilate should have asked is, 'WHO is truth?' Perhaps the answer would have come back along the lines of, 'Well, Pilate, I Am the way, the life and the truth!'

In our world today it is so difficult to uncover the truth. The news is either sensationalist or designed to attract maximum audience readership or viewing. There is very little that reflects the truth and people are searching for the truth and a purpose in their lives.

The Good News is that Jesus is truth and we can be confident that when we speak to our friends, neighbours, work colleagues and families that we have reflected that truth. The Holy Spirit witnesses to our spirit that Jesus is the Son of God. In the same way, Jesus says to Pilate that he bears witness to the truth and that those who want the truth will hear his voice. This doesn't mean to say that our witness will be easy or that we won't face opposition but that we will have the confidence that truth is on our side.

DAY 6 - MEET THEM WHERE THEY ARE

Read Acts 8:26-40 (see Appendix)

Key verses: 8:30-31 - So Philip ran to him and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet and asked, "Do you understand what you are reading?" And he said, "How can I, unless someone guides me?" And he invited Philip to come up and sit with him.

What an example Philip sets for the church of today; obedience to an angel, effective evangelism and a baptism, all in one short passage! So, what made Philip's evangelistic technique stand out? Simple - he met the eunuch exactly where he was.

How many churches try to encourage people to come to them? Lots! In stark contrast we see Philip travel to where the eunuch was and begin helping him with a passage he was already looking at. Philip didn't bang him over the head with tough biblical teaching or start to share his own favourite scripture. Instead, he met the guy exactly where he was, both physically and spiritually. We can learn from this lesson. As the church, we must be prepared to go out of our buildings and evangelise people right where they are.

The pièce de résistance of Philip's time with the eunuch was his response to the question, 'what prevents me from being baptised?' The answer? The rule book did! The Pharisees and Scribes would never have allowed such an abhorrent departure from the Law of Moses. But Philip concentrated on the heart of the person before him; meeting his deepest need of all, that of salvation in Jesus Christ. Philip went ahead with the baptism and the rest is history - history that some believe is the root of Christianity in Ethiopia!

Philip's example is inspiring because it authorises us to take up the basic call of the Gospel: take the light into the darkness where we will find people who truly need the light.

DAY 7 - SEE THE OPPORTUNITY

Read Acts 16:25-40 (see Appendix)

Key verses: 29-32 - And the jailer called for lights and rushed in, and trembling with fear he fell down before Paul and Silas. Then he brought them out and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" And they said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household." And they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house.

I once heard someone say, 'No people in history have had as many opportunities to hear the truth about God and to learn how salvation can be found by turning to Jesus Christ as those who live in this country in the 21st Century.' With technology and the vast number of churches today, you would think that Christianity would be exploding. However, it is imploding!

According to statistics, Christians today are having less of an impact on the people around them than the great men and women of the first century. All believers today should have a faith that impacts the people around them, as Paul had.

We can learn from Acts 16:25-40 how to effectively reach others with the truth of God's Word:

1. Remain faithful during the hard times - Paul and Silas were facing a difficult time in their lives. However, their actions while in prison show a spirit of faithfulness.
2. Look for opportunities to impact lives - When the prison doors flew open and the shackles broke loose, there was a chance for Paul and Silas to escape! Surely the thought of leaving to go and preach again crossed their minds. But they saw the opportunity that, at the risk of physical pain and suffering, it was worth staying to impact a life! The lives of the jailer and his family were changed that day when, through Paul, they discovered how they could be saved.

DAY 8 - BE OBEDIENT TO GOD'S CALL

Read Acts 16:11-15 (See Appendix)

Key verse: 14 - One who heard us was a woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple goods, who was a worshipper of God. The Lord opened her heart to pay attention to what was said by Paul.

The disciples sense God's calling in this passage, but the exact nature of their mission is only revealed to them gradually by the Spirit.

God understands our limitations. For hill walkers it can be somewhat off putting to see the full extent of the walk at the outset, and it is easier to take one stretch at a time. When they finally get to the end, it is incredibly rewarding to look back at the journey they have been on.

The disciples were called to Macedonia to witness to gentile women and challenged to demonstrate their confidence in Lydia's conversion by staying with her. If they had understood this was their mission from the outset, they might not have gone, but then they would have missed the opportunity to share the Good News and witness the growth of the Church.

The Spirit sometimes works on a 'need to know' basis and our call, like the disciples, is to be obedient.

Part 2

Power Evangelism

How did Jesus do it?

Days 9 - 11

How did the disciples do it?

Days 12 - 16

DAY 9 - POINT TO GOD

Mark 6:41-44 - And taking the five loaves and the two fish he looked up to heaven and said a blessing and broke the loaves and gave them to the disciples to set before the people. And he divided the two fish among them all. And they all ate and were satisfied. And they took up twelve baskets full of broken pieces and of the fish. And those who ate the loaves were five thousand men.

If Jesus wanted to get the crowd's attention, this was certainly a good way to do it! Jesus works in power both to meet the needs of the people around him, and to show something of the character of God. The extraordinary generosity of this picnic lunch tells us of God's overwhelming love and grace.

However, we know that the crowds following Jesus liked signs but didn't always want to accept the truths behind them. Here Jesus isn't just giving out a freebie, but trying to tell them that he is as essential to life as is the bread they eat. This great miracle isn't about wowing the crowd and winning their approval; rather, it's about God reaching out in compassion to people in need, and revealing more of himself through his actions.

And it all starts with Jesus looking to heaven, and praying. If we want God to act in power as we share his Good News with others, that is where it must start - and end - for us too. We point to him, and we depend on him.

DAY 10 - REACH OUT TO ALL

Luke 8:43-48 - And there was a woman who had had a discharge of blood for twelve years, and though she had spent all her living on physicians, she could not be healed by anyone. She came up behind him and touched the fringe of his garment, and immediately her discharge of blood ceased. And Jesus said, "Who was it that touched me?" When all denied it, Peter said, "Master, the crowds surround you and are pressing in on you!" But Jesus said, "Someone touched me, for I perceive that power has gone out from me." And when the woman saw that she was not hidden, she came trembling, and falling down before him declared in the presence of all the people why she had touched him, and how she had been immediately healed. And he said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace."

Because of her condition, this woman would have been considered ritually unclean and therefore untouchable, an outcast, shunned by all. Fighting her way through a huge crowd, touching them as she went, she came to Jesus and touched him too. By touching his cloak she made him, a Jew, ritually unclean but this didn't bother Jesus, nor did the fact that she was a woman.

In the eyes of Jesus no-one is untouchable, inferior, unclean or a sinner beyond redemption. By the power of healing Jesus showed people who God really is.

Let us be prepared, through the strength and power of the Holy Spirit, to reach out to ALL.

DAY 11 - DO NOT FEAR

Read Luke 8:49-56 (See Appendix)

Key verses: 53-54 - And they laughed at him, knowing that she was dead. But taking her by the hand he called, saying, "Child, arise." And her spirit returned, and she got up at once.

It is fascinating that the reaction of the crowd of mourners to Jesus' comment about the girl being asleep is laughter.

Why is that?

I suspect the crowd thinks that Jesus isn't facing up to reality. There is an undertone in the previous verses of the little girl being a lost cause - one of the crowd tells Jairus not to bother the teacher anymore because his daughter is dead. In other words, 'face the facts, give up and go home.'

How often do we believe that situations are beyond repair, beyond redemption? Jesus' antidote to this negativity is simple - his words to Jairus are, '*Do not fear; only believe.*'

Where in our lives is Jesus calling us to stop listening to the voices of defeatism and to believe? Great things can happen if we are willing to step out in faith and follow him.

DAY 12 - WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH HOLY SPIRIT

Acts 10:44-48 - While Peter was still saying these things, the Holy Spirit fell on all who heard the word. And the believers from among the circumcised who had come with Peter were amazed, because the gift of the Holy Spirit was poured out even on the Gentiles. For they were hearing them speaking in tongues and extolling God. Then Peter declared, "Can anyone withhold water for baptizing these people, who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?" And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked him to remain for some days.

Isn't it wonderful that the word that is spoken in this passage is confirmed by the Holy Spirit?

The Holy Spirit wasn't only available to the early disciples to give the Good News of Jesus a 'kick start'. He is still available to us today and we need an inundation of the Holy Spirit to flood not only our lives but also the lives of those with whom we share the Good News.

The passage above from Acts says something very pertinent that should really encourage us; '*While Peter was STILL saying these things...*' In other words the truth was being confirmed by the Holy Spirit with powerful effect at the very same time that he was speaking in faith to those around him. And we can see the result - the gift of the Holy Spirit was **POURED** out - not trickled - God giving himself entirely to those who were prepared to acknowledge him as Lord and Saviour. This is our confidence that God is working with us.

Friends who went to China last year experienced exactly what Peter experienced - an outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Those who report back on Chelmsford's Church at Car Boot Sale find that so many want to talk about faith. It is the Lord walking with his people and confirming his presence when these things happen. Be encouraged!

DAY 13 - ALLOW HOLY SPIRIT TO GUIDE YOU

Read Acts 3:1-10 (see Appendix)

Key verses: 9-10 - And all the people saw him walking and praising God, and recognized him as the one who sat at the Beautiful Gate of the temple, asking for alms. And they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him.

The beggar's mind was fixed on the need to beg for his livelihood. He just wanted money to live on, and needed help from passers-by.

The disciples heard his request and saw his real need for God in his life. They got his full attention and through the power of the Holy Spirit healed his whole being, spiritually and physically.

There was a time when I anxiously asked for prayer for a longstanding physical problem. The person praying for me quietly waited on God for his guidance before speaking out their prayer. Initially I was surprised that they did not pray for the answer to my problem, but they prayed for God's peace in my life. The calming effect on my whole being was so wonderful, there was no doubt that God was present in every part of me, and I could trust that he had the situation in hand, and he did.

DAY 14 - EMBRACE THE CHALLENGE

Acts 20:7-12 (see Appendix)

Key verse: 10 - But Paul went down and bent over him, and taking him in his arms, said, "Do not be alarmed, for his life is in him."

Well, let's be honest; how many of us have ever begun to drift off when the vicar is preaching, especially if they were preaching until midnight!

Yet again, Paul uses an awkward situation to demonstrate the power of God. What faith from to be looking at a dead man and yet declare, *'Do not be alarmed, for his life is in him'*. This death to life situation shows the power of God in action and echoes what happened to Jesus at the resurrection.

Notice after this event, Paul continued to talk to the people. Having just witnessed an incredible miracle I bet they were now far more interested in wanting to know about this Jesus that Paul knew!

Hopefully, we will never be in such a situation but there will be times when our faith is challenged. Have we got the courage to pray and expect a miracle to happen? Are we then willing to use that situation to bring the truth and beauty of Jesus before those we meet?

DAY 15 - BUILD RELATIONSHIPS

Acts 28:7-10 - Now in the neighborhood of that place were lands belonging to the chief man of the island, named Publius, who received us and entertained us hospitably for three days. It happened that the father of Publius lay sick with fever and dysentery. And Paul visited him and prayed, and putting his hands on him healed him. And when this had taken place, the rest of the people on the island who had diseases also came and were cured. They also honoured us greatly, and when we were about to sail, they put on board whatever we needed.

It was following several weeks as a prisoner at sea, after enduring a violent storm and being shipwrecked on the shores of Malta that Paul embarked on this healing ministry. Perhaps it would not have been unreasonable for him to have kept a low profile and regained his strength for a while. However, Paul saw this as an opportunity to evangelise to the people of Malta instead. It all sounds rather daunting. One thing for Paul to do, but surely not expected of us?

It is easy to focus on the acts of healing alone. Yet the passage tells us the healing was preceded by Paul taking time to build relationships with Publius and his family, and praying for them.

Power evangelism may indeed involve us in healing ministry, but equally God wants to use us by ministering to those we meet, through spending time with them and praying for them. Let us ask God for courage to take every opportunity to share His love with those we meet each day, and to take time to build relationships and pray.

DAY 16 - ACKNOWLEDGE THE GREATER THINGS

John 14:12 - Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes in me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do, because I am going to the Father.

Throughout the bible we see men and women demonstrating the power of God in a way that forces onlookers to acknowledge that our God is the one true God! Just look at Daniel 6; Daniel believed in a God of miracles and a miracle he saw with his own eyes - a ravenous lion declined a free meal! But Daniel wasn't the only witness to the power of God that day. King Darius saw the proof with his own eyes, and Daniel 6 ends with a letter written by the King to 'all peoples' testifying to the power of the one true God.

Was Daniel the only way God could impress King Darius? Of course not; God can do anything he pleases. What we see here in scripture is that it was God's choice to use Daniel, thus revealing his heart to involve us in his mission to reach out to the world.

Jesus came to earth as the new standard; he demonstrated the power and might of God through creative miracles in addition to miraculous courage, patience and love. That same Jesus says that those who believe in him - us! - will do the same and greater. Because He says we will do greater works than him, this is hard for us to comprehend and we could be tempted to explain away what our Saviour said. That is until we look at the original Greek and discover that, perplexing as it may be, he did say those words, and he was instructing us to expect a life of miracles, as he did.

The world is full of King Darius's that are waiting for the church of today to demonstrate the glorious power of Jesus. The question is; are we willing to be a Daniel and put our neck on the line? To truly identify ourselves as followers of Jesus, we must expect to do the things that he did and that means coming to terms with ministering to people in his miraculous power!

Part 3

Servant Evangelism

What did Jesus teach?

Days 17 - 19

What did the disciples teach?

Days 20 - 22

Serving one another

Days 23 - 24

DAY 17 - THE COST OF SERVANTHOOD

Read Isaiah 53:1-12 (see Appendix)

Key verse: 11 - Out of the anguish of his soul he shall see and be satisfied; by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities.

Michael Green's 'Called to Serve', a popular evangelical book of the 1980s, is a book that I still recommend to many people today. It sums up the Christian calling and life; not only that of Christian leaders, but that of every Christian.

Have you ever sung the following lines with passion and tenderness: 'This is our God, the servant king'? This song is melodic and emotional but I wonder whether we sing it wholeheartedly or accept some of its lines, while paying lip service to others? You see, the full phrase is: 'This is our God, the servant king; he calls us now to follow him, to give our lives as a daily offering of worship to the servant king'.

True and genuine service is costly and demanding. It requires of us humility and clear knowledge of the needs of those we are seeking to serve. It is not about choosing something we like to do and then serving others through it whether they like it or not. Instead it is about finding a need and doing all that is in our power to meet it.

Humanity's needs were forgiveness and salvation so something needed to be done in order that human beings could be righteous. The cost was too high, yet it needed to be paid, so God chose to serve us by dying for us. He knew the need; he chose to serve.

As we discover the needs of those around us, may we be willing to pay the cost to serve them.

DAY 18 - BY ROYAL APPOINTMENT

Read John 13:3-16 (see Appendix)

Key verses: 15-16 - For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you. Truly, truly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him.

What did Jesus do that created such a fuss at the dinner table? Imagine the scene: after the Passover meal Jesus took on the job of a servant, got on his hands and knees and washed the disciples' feet. One commentary says; 'Jesus, knowing that he was God, reclined at the table and took on the job of a servant'. What a contrast; king and at the same time, servant. These two positions seem to be incomparable, so how can they exist together? Except for the fact that God's unique love made it possible, because the King, as well as being the sovereign ruler of the universe, is ever so kind, ever so humble and ever so gracious. Aren't you glad he is? In fact, such is the quality of this love, that it drove God to serve us to the point of exchanging his life for ours on the cross.

Our world is full of proud and insecure people who will do anything to be first in the queue and that presents us with a challenge - will we stand out as people who humbly serve others for no other reason than we love them? This will only be possible when we have a 'Kingdom mind-set'; when we are secure in God's love and know that we are adopted into God's royal family as children of the King with an inheritance. We may be called to be servants, but we are God's children and that is what gives us our sense of value. Jesus displayed the most profound example of humility in the full knowledge of who he was. We can follow his example as we take hold of our true identity.

DAY 19 - DEVELOP A THIRST FOR THE GOSPEL

Matthew 20:25-28 - But Jesus called them to him and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. It shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be your slave, even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

What would you consider makes someone great? In this reading Jesus contrasts greatness in the eyes of the world with greatness in the Kingdom of God. Greatness in the world is determined by status and in the Kingdom by function. In the world greatness is shown by ruling; in the Kingdom by serving. By serving others we challenge the way the world lives and the values it considers important. As we do this, people begin to wonder if there may be a better way to live.

Service is about putting the needs of others before our own and seeing that no task is too menial for us to do for someone else. The way that we serve Jesus is by serving others and being willing to do literally anything, however costly, irksome, or undignified, in order to help them.

A young salesman was disappointed about losing a big sale, and as he talked with his sales manager he lamented, 'I guess it just proves you can lead a horse to water but you can't make him drink.' The manager replied, 'Son, take my advice: your job is not to make him drink. Your job is to make him thirsty.' So it is with evangelism. Our lives should be so filled with Christ that they create a thirst for the Gospel.

DAY 20 - BE HOSPITABLE

1 Peter 4:8-10 - Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins. Show hospitality to one another without grumbling. As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace.

Love involves acceptance and welcome to people just as they are. Even when we find people difficult or awkward to get on with, showing unconditional love and warmth to them often helps reveal the reason why they behave as they do, and we may be able to gradually move on into a better relationship.

The Dutch priest and writer Henri Nouwen said, 'Hospitality is not to change people but to offer them space where change can take place.' Jesus is hospitality personified.

Each of us have different and varied gifts given by God to be used for the blessing and good of individuals and the community. It is important to know what our gifts are, if not, perhaps ask a trusted friend, or try a gift discernment course, and enjoy using your gifts in serving others and sharing the love of God.

DAY 21 - DELIBERATE HUMILITY

1 Peter 5:5-7 - Likewise, you who are younger, be subject to the elders. Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble."

'It's hard to be humble,' says an old country song, 'when you're perfect in every way'. And don't we know the feeling.

Peter's plea is a call to give up pride. Instead, we are to clothe ourselves with humility, putting others first. This seems to go against the grain of all that the world encourages. Humility is avoided in the scramble to reach the top and viewed as a wearying experience. But Peter declares it is through this route we find God's favour.

If anyone can claim to be 'perfect in every way', it is Jesus. Did he find it hard to be humble? Would the Servant King sometimes have preferred his old title of 'carpenter' and a quiet life in Nazareth? Faced with another long queue of people to heal, did he yearn for sleep and a nice cup of tea? To give up giving, rather than continue down a relentless path, leading to a violent conclusion? Knowing how the King carried on serving regardless, what stopped him becoming proud? Perhaps because he understood how God opposes the proud, but favours the humble.

Consider lent, it might be viewed as a strange time, when we deliberately choose to lose something we like and make life harder for ourselves. Why do we put ourselves through this? Because, in some mysterious way, we hope to gain something more valuable...?

As Jesus deliberately lost so much, choosing the harder life of 'servant', what did he hope to gain? Something of great value? Us, perhaps?

DAY 22 - DEVELOP A HUMBLE ATTITUDE

Read Philippians 2:3-8 (see Appendix)

Key verses: 3-4 - Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.

One thing I know about myself, and hopefully I'm not alone here, is that I'm basically a selfish person. At heart, I want what I want and I want it now! The whole idea of considering others better than myself seems completely unnatural.

What would it look like for us to consider others better than ourselves? Simple things like letting others go first, giving up the biggest piece of dessert (or the last piece). More important things like keeping your promises and showing up on time to appointments with others and giving money away to others before you have everything you want.

Our role model for all of this 'humility' business is Jesus himself. Paul lays that out when he says in verse 5 (NIV), *'Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus...'*

Mother Teresa dedicated her life to helping the poorest of the poor in Calcutta, India. This humble servant woman achieved world-wide fame for her service. Paul says that when we live lives of humility, being a servant, putting others first - the result is we shall shine like stars in the universe as we hold out the word of life to others. Our challenge is to live in the shadow of our Lord Jesus, who led a humble life, and because of it now basks in eternal glory with the Father. I urge you to write down one concrete action step you can take this week to develop this attitude of humility and follow the example of Jesus. Will you risk it?

DAY 23 - PRACTICAL COMPASSION

James 2: 14-16 - Suppose a brother or a sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to them, "Go in peace; keep warm and well fed," but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it?

How often are we moved to tears when we see images on our television screens of intense suffering and need, following natural disasters and war? Images of our brothers and sisters without food and shelter stir us into action to respond.

Yet it can be all too easy to forget the suffering as news moves on and the plight of needy people is no longer broadcast.

Recently I passed a homeless man sitting in a street doorway. I had walked on some distance before I felt prompted to return and take him a meal. I can think of other occasions, though, when I have kept walking.

In today's reading, James reminds us that practical care for others in need should be fundamental to our individual and collective Christian witness, not an optional extra. He continues to say that faith without action is meaningless. Jesus, as our Servant King, teaches us compassion through his perfect example.

Let us reflect on the words of the song by Graham Kendrick, 'Give us compassion we pray, melt our cold hearts, let tears fall like rain. Come change our love from a spark to a flame.'

DAY 24 - GOOD SPOUSEKEEPING

Ephesians 5:21 - Be subject to one another out of reverence to Christ.

This is one of the great paradoxes and mysteries of marriage, which at first reading can seem to be at odds with the modern view of equality of the sexes.

Wives are to submit to their husbands and husbands are to love their wives - not because they have to, but because they want to. It means putting your partner's wellbeing and needs before your own. It's not about dominating, but cherishing each other. In essence, by loving your partner you love yourself, as you are both one. It's about loving as Jesus loves - with sacrificial love that is costly.

The trouble is, it's not always that easy in practice! Sometimes it feels that the other person doesn't have your best interests at heart - at times our natural selfishness and desire for what we want takes over. We need to recognise that relationships are not simple and circumstances are not always fair and that it is easy to hurt those closest to us.

Over many years of marriage we have found it is easiest for the 'aggrieved' person to make the first move in saying sorry, sadly something we have both had to learn to do!

Let us therefore, *'Be subject to one another out of reverence for Christ'*.

Part 4

Friendship Evangelism

How should we do it?

Days 25 - 32

DAY 25 - SHARING OUT OF LOVE

Read 1 John 3:16-24 (see Appendix)

Key verse: 6 - By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers.

Christ gave up his life for us because he loves us. He pours his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit who lives in us when we put our trust in him. This love is for sharing, indeed John says that if we won't share what we have with our Christian neighbour who is in need then how can God's love be in us? Will we live only for ourselves or will we demonstrate the love of God by giving our time or money or practical help to others?

Real love is an action not a feeling, and it produces selfless, sacrificial giving. How different things could be if we all showed an act of kindness to someone each day. Even a phone call can brighten up the day for someone who is lonely or housebound. As we ask our Father he will give us ideas and resources and all we need to be bearers of his love and Good News.

I am challenged to start each day praying that God will lead me to someone who needs kindness, encouragement or help that day. If we kept a diary we might be amazed at what the Lord has done.

DAY 26 - SHARING OUT OF COMPASSION

Matthew 15:32 - Then Jesus called his disciples to him and said, "I have compassion on the crowd because they have been with me now three days and have nothing to eat. And I am unwilling to send them away hungry, lest they faint on the way."

Jesus loved the people who gathered round on the hillside to bring their sick to him. We read that he healed them all, and now they had been there three days and were hungry. Jesus had compassion on them, so he asked the disciples how many loaves they had to offer. Jesus thanked God for the seven loaves and broke them into pieces and gave them to the disciples. Thousands were fed as they shared them out. Did the people think of Moses and the hungry Israelites in the wilderness when God provided manna for them?

We can remember what Jesus said as he celebrated Passover and broke the bread before His crucifixion, *'Take, eat; this is my body'* (Matthew 26:26). After his resurrection, as he shared with the two from Emmaus, he was revealed to them in the breaking of the bread. As we love our neighbour and share our bread with them Jesus will be revealed. This Good News of the love of God who gave his Son for us is multiplying all over the world. The Kingdom of God, that Jesus revealed in this story, grows and grows.

Lord, you had compassion on the hungry. May we too have compassion on those who are in need and share what we have with them.

DAY 27 - SHARING BY PRAYING

Read Acts 3: 1-10 (see Appendix)

Key verse: 6 - I have no silver and gold, but what I do have I give to you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk!

The lame man was just, 'born that way'. How many people do you know that were just 'born that way'? Perhaps grumpy, tight-fisted or just 'all over the place'. We say of them they were, 'born that way' and what we really mean is there is no hope of changing them; their character was set in stone from the moment of birth.

Well, Peter and John knew differently. They knew it was possible to have a new birth, to be born again into a whole new nature; the nature of God. This is what they had experienced and this is what they had to pass on.

Like Peter and John, with authority we can reach out to people and raise them to their feet both physically and spiritually, but our fundamental starting point has to be that nothing is too difficult for God.

DAY 28 - SHARING YOUR LIFE

Matthew 5:16 - In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.

You don't have to read much of the Bible to find out that the words God speaks are very important and carry tremendous weight. His words have great value because every time He speaks there is a corresponding action to back it up. Jesus never said one thing and did another. All his words were authenticated by what he did, showing that they are true and trustworthy.

Referring to Jesus, John 1:14 says, *'the Word became flesh'*. He not only came with a message, he was the message. Jesus said, *'I came that they might have life and have it abundantly,'* (John 10:10) and then went on to demonstrate this by healing people and setting them free from demon possession. He said *'I am the way, and the truth and the life,'* (John 14:6) and went on to raise Lazarus from the dead. Jesus said that he loved his disciples and went on to wash their feet at the end of the Passover meal, followed by the final gift of himself as a sacrifice. Actions closely followed behind the words of Jesus.

Now park that thought for a moment, and consider when we share the truth of Jesus with people, is there a contradiction between what we say and what we do? Is our mouth writing cheques that can't be banked? Do our words have real value? The stiff challenge in the face of sceptical unbelievers is authentic living. People want to be convinced not by our words alone but by what they see. Jesus set an example of living up to his word, being the genuine article, the real deal.

DAY 29 - SHARING YOUR TESTIMONY

Mark 5:19-20 - "Go home to your friends and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you." And he went away and began to proclaim in the Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him, and everyone marvelled.

Jesus told this man exactly what he wants us to do; to share our testimonies and tell people what Jesus has done for us - this is part of the great commission. How can people make a decision to follow the Lord if they aren't told about the Good News of Jesus?

Notice that Jesus told the man to go home and share his testimony; you don't have to travel the world to spread the Good News, just be a witness for Jesus where you are in life!

I have found that sharing my testimony can be hard. However, when the opportunity arises I am always prepared to give my story of coming to Jesus. Just by living differently and not conforming to the way of the world - getting drunk, having sex with just anyone - people ask, 'why not?' I have often taken this opportunity to tell people my testimony; my actions speak louder than words. Some people may not have read a Bible recently but they will watch and listen to how we behave.

It is our responsibility to share our testimony when we are given the opportunity. When you get that prompting to share - do it, as Jesus told the man in this passage.

Your testimony is powerful, it's real and, as we see from this passage, those who heard it were amazed. Next time you're presented with an opportunity to share your testimony, give it a go and tell of the great things Jesus has done for you.

DAY 30 - SHARING BY BEING CLOSE

Matthew 11:19 - The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, 'Look at him! A glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!' Yet wisdom is justified by her deeds."

Is our church a safe place to be? Yes? Great!

Is our church a welcoming place to be? Yes? Fantastic!

Do we reach out into the community, going to the dark places, shining Jesus' light to those considered outcasts from today's society and drawing them into our welcoming, safe church? Quite possibly our answer to this question is less emphatic.

But Jesus' example to us in this verse is precisely that which we are to follow. He didn't care if his reputation amongst the 'nice' people in society was tarnished because, in God's eyes, these were exactly the people who needed most to hear that they were loved and accepted. Shouldn't we follow this example too?

It is time to ask the Lord to help us overcome our fears and prejudices to reach outside of our safe church building and shine his light into the darkest corners of our community to help those struggling to help themselves.

DAY 31 - SHARING BY ENCOURAGING

Luke 23:43 - And he said to him, "Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise"

Jesus, while on the cross as fully God, but also fully human, underwent unimaginable agony. He felt abandoned by God, he was close to death but still he was able to bring comfort and hope to another man and was able, as a man experiencing the same as him, to truly say, 'I do know what you are going through'. This criminal, like all of us, was loved by God no matter what, and capable of redemption even at the point of death.

Jesus 'did' evangelism first and foremost by demonstrating how God's love and compassion is all inclusive. His actions revealed the truth that we are all equal and equally loved in God's sight.

We sometimes struggle with the concept of Evangelism with a capital E, but this need not be the case. All we need to do is reach out in a spirit of compassion, friendship and non-judgemental, unconditional love, just as Jesus did.

DAY 32 - SHARING BY NOT IMPOSING

Acts 15:10-11 - Now, therefore, why are you putting God to the test by placing a yoke on the neck of the disciples that neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear? But we believe that we will be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, just as they will.

A little bit earlier in Acts 10, Peter is asked by God to do two unusual things: In a vision he is told to kill and eat animals defined as ritually unclean by the Law of Moses. He is then told to go to the house of a Gentile called Cornelius. Again, something forbidden by the rules.

What should Peter do? He has grown up in an environment where the Law of Moses has been the centre of religious, social, economic and political life.

What happens when the God that you believe in is doing something so big that all of the old regulations and customs can't handle the magnitude of the new reality? Peter's answer to this question was to choose grace and visit Cornelius, which was the first step in the Gospel and the Holy Spirit moving beyond Israel to the whole world.

Jesus' death on the cross shows us what grace looks like. Grace is what saves us, not rules. Let's share his amazing grace.

Part 5

Event Evangelism

How should we do it?

Days 33 - 40

DAY 33 - BE RELEVANT

John 1:46 - "Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?" Nathanael asked. "Come and see," said Philip.

In 1984 I attended a Billy Graham mission event in Bristol, and what an exciting event it was! Many people still talk about those big stadium missions with such excitement and delight. For many of them it was the time where either they gave their life to Christ or one of their family members or friends did so. But since the mid-1990s we seem to have lost sight of such events, deciding that they do not work anymore and that they are not as effective as they once were. If this is true, can we find a reason why this might be the case?

As I pondered this subject and read around it, I found two possible reasons that highlight why this might be so. Firstly, there is a lack of general knowledge of the Christian faith in our society and culture and, therefore, it is much harder to bring people to a saving knowledge of Jesus. You see, in the past the faith language was still in common use and people knew sin, its consequences and what needed to be done. This is not so today.

The second possible reason is the personal witness of the individual believer. This is not as widespread or consistent as it needs to be.

The impact of a big mission event relies on the foundation of day-to-day personal outreach; sharing our stories, resources and energies with those who surround us. It is a partnership between the church as a body and the believer. Any event we offer needs to be accessible to those we invite, but must first and foremost host Jesus, making it possible for those who don't yet know him to come and meet him.

DAY 34 - A TEAM APPROACH

John 15:16 - You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you.

Can the Olympics and Paralympics be so long ago that we have forgotten them? I don't think so. Even a sports phobic people got excited! Thousands of people who were not taking part as sports' men and women became games makers, stewards and helpers in one way or another. And each individual competitor had a team around them. You could actually feel that 'Team GB' spirit pervading the games.

Have you noticed how great people in history also had a team around them? Jesus himself chose a team of twelve men to be with him and continue his work when he was gone - and that team grew and grew and before many years had passed the Good News of salvation through Jesus Christ had spread all over the known world. It's amazing what a team can do!

Just as Jesus chose his twelve disciples, so he chooses us to spread the faith where we are. So let's become a positive thinking team as we remember the great privilege we all enjoy.

DAY 35 - BE CONCERNED FOR OTHERS

John 2:1-5 - On the third day there was a wedding at Cana in Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. Jesus also was invited to the wedding with his disciples. When the wine ran out, the mother of Jesus said to him, "They have no wine." And Jesus said to her, "Woman, what does this have to do with me? My hour has not yet come." His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you."

We live in a society that likes projects, plans and deadlines, where speed is good and going slowly is bad. We must be faster and more efficient, we must manage our resources better.

So, as Jesus entered the third day of his public ministry, having been baptized and having called his first disciples, he must surely have had plenty of tasks to keep him busy. But no - instead, we see him heading off to a wedding. Isn't that taking things a bit too casually? What about finding a crowd or two to teach, or rebuking a few Pharisees? But he goes to celebrate with friends, and when the party looks like it's falling apart for lack of wine, he performs his first miracle seen only by the servants. It mattered to him that his friends' wedding feast went well, and it mattered to him to be there with them.

If in the midst of all our ideas and initiatives, our plans and our aspirations, we ever start to lose our concern for people and for their lives and their needs, we will miss the point - and miss opportunities.

The church must be concerned for others if it is to succeed.

DAY 36 - SPREAD THE WORD

John 20:31 - ...but these [signs] are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

I think we sometimes forget the power of the Word of God.

When my children were small, it was wonderful to read them the stories of the Bible and for them to identify with the different characters as they encountered God. My son particularly loved the Old Testament stories, probably because there were a lot about fighting and danger - David is still his hero today!

Of course, Jesus is the living Word of God; he is the one who brings the scriptures to life and gives them their meaning. In reading of his life and ministry and by encountering him in person today, through the Spirit, lives are changed.

Let's be excited by God's Word - let's read the Bible and allow God to teach us by his Spirit, but most importantly let's meet with Jesus, the Living Word, and allow him to speak into our lives.

DAY 37 - HAVE AN OUTWARD FOCUS

Matthew 28:19 - Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit...

How much do we want our churches to grow?

The venue was booked; the evangelist had arrived; all the preparations had been made. The people arrived as the band practised. The welcomers were at the doors with bright smiles on their faces. The event began. Everybody there had a great time; a real uplifting praise party atmosphere. But, for the organisers there was disappointment. The plan had been that each Christian should invite a friend who didn't yet know the Lord. It was an opportunity to help extend the Kingdom. But they didn't. How sad is that?

We were never meant to keep the Good News for ourselves. Odd, isn't it, that when an exciting event happens in our families we want the whole world to know? But, when we think about the greatest news in the whole world we keep it to ourselves.

We can't continue to sit comfortably in our churches enjoying the worship and seeing our friends when we leave people outside and don't invite them in or share the Good News with them. What would be your excuse for leaving folk outside?

DAY 38 - LET THE CHURCH GROW

Matthew 19:13-15 (see Appendix)

Key verse: 14 - Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven."

Quite often children are seen as a nuisance in church. Bags of tatty toys might be supplied in a side room to 'keep them quiet', there may be a Sunday school. You might hear people say 'children are the future of the church', but I beg to differ. I believe children are very much today's church. Making children and their families welcome with quality resources, enthusiastic leaders and accessible services brings growth and causes preconceptions of church being 'boring' to be broken down.

Attendance at a holiday club can lead to the rest of the family coming along to see what an all-age service is about. Jesus wanted the children to be able to come to him unhindered because their innocence and acceptance modelled the behaviour of those that are already in heaven and was an example to the rest of us.

Do we do all we can to support the children's work in our churches? Do we have talents that could be used by the team to reach out to the families in our community?

DAY 39 - IDENTIFY THE DEEPER NEED

Acts 17:19-20 - And they took him and brought him to the Areopagus, saying, "May we know what this new teaching is that you are presenting? For you bring some strange things to our ears. We wish to know therefore what these things mean."

Mission is exciting but can also be daunting, particularly when we are out of our comfort zone. We learn in this passage that Paul is 'distressed' by what he sees in Athens, but he also recognises a spiritual hunger and does not avoid the situation but identifies with that spiritual yearning, pointing to Jesus as the fulfilment.

A friend once complained to me that a young man had turned up at her school, bombarding her with irritating, almost offensive, questions about her Christian faith at inappropriate moments. The questions, however, were motivated by a genuine interest, and had the friend realised that, in time, the young man would not only become a Christian but also her husband, she might have been less concerned!

Mission is about meeting spiritual need, wherever that may arise and however challenging it may be; schools, work places, car boot sales and even psychic fairs provide examples of places where those needs may be expressed and we need to be alert and respond.

DAY 40 - OUTRAGEOUS GENEROSITY

1 John 2: 15-17 - Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world. And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever.

Evangelism needs resources, but why should we respond to this call? It is because our God is a generous God. There are three elements of God's generosity. Firstly, God allowed himself to be nailed to a cross so that we should have the benefit of eternal life. Secondly, that whilst we were still sinners he gave himself so that we should have an opportunity to be set free from our sin. Thirdly, now set free from sin we have the privilege of direct access to God the Father, through prayer. That's generosity and love on an unimaginable scale. Only faith appropriates these benefits.

The above reading challenges us not to be attracted to or deceived by the world. The Latin sums it up perfectly in the phrase: 'O quam cito gloria transit mundi', which means 'How quickly the glory of the world passes away'. It is because the glory of this world is fading that we are encouraged to invest our time, effort and money in the eternal Kingdom of our Lord which will never fade away. If it is only by faith that we can appropriate Kingdom benefits, then it is also by faith that we give back to the Lord that which he gave us in the first place. Think about it this way; someone once loved you enough to pay for you to see that Christian film, be taken by minibus to a gospel event, to have that meal and hear a speaker give their testimony - whatever. This calls for generosity and in being generous we shall be set free from any spiritual poverty that haunts us. The Lord will reward our faith and in eternity we shall see the result of our love for others and our faithfulness to him who gave it all for us.

CLOSING COMMENTS

Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you." John 20:21

It has been both encouraging and challenging to journey through the past 40 days using the 'Time to Share' studies written by members of our three churches in the Great Baddow Team Ministry. I was struck afresh by some themes that kept emerging even though so many different people have contributed. Two in particular stand out and are summed up by the verse from John's Gospel as Jesus commissions his followers with the task of mission.

Firstly, we are reminded that our God is the God of Mission. He sent his Son out of love to a needy world so that all might experience his love, mercy and grace and all might enjoy the fullness of life that comes through knowing and walking with him. Jesus' life and ministry reflected the very character of the Father as he sought out those who needed to hear and receive the Good News of the Kingdom of God. This is the God that we believe in and the phrase that is sometimes used to sum it up is *Missio Dei*, the mission of God.

Secondly, those who bear Christ's name, from the first disciples to you and me, are called to share in this mission. This is no optional extra; it is part of what it means to be a follower of Christ. We are to reflect the character of the God in whom we believe by committing ourselves to the task we have been given. We have been sent by Jesus to share the Good News that people so desperately need to hear and experience. We can do this in many different ways, as we have been reminded in these studies, using the variety and diversity of gifts that the Lord has given us. Above all we do this not in our own strength but by the power of the Holy Spirit. We cannot convert anyone - that is God's work - but each of us can be the means by which he touches the lives of those we meet.

One final thought: It is fantastic to have a year set aside for outreach and to spend a focused period of time during Lent reflecting on our call to share God's Good News. However, this is not a time limited exercise; this is the ongoing task we are called to as God's people. So may these studies be a springboard to a renewed commitment to sharing God's love to our community and to a world that so desperately needs to receive it.

Revd Canon Philip Ritchie

APPENDIX

DAY 5

John 18:33-38

33 So Pilate entered his headquarters again and called Jesus and said to him, "Are you the King of the Jews?" 34 Jesus answered, "Do you say this of your own accord, or did others say it to you about me?" 35 Pilate answered, "Am I a Jew? Your own nation and the chief priests have delivered you over to me. What have you done?" 36 Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would have been fighting, that I might not be delivered over to the Jews. But my kingdom is not from the world." 37 Then Pilate said to him, "So you are a king?" Jesus answered, "You say that I am a king. For this purpose I was born and for this purpose I have come into the world—to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice." 38 Pilate said to him, "What is truth?"

DAY 6

Acts 8:26-40

26 Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip, "Rise and go toward the south to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza." This is a desert place. 27 And he rose and went. And there was an Ethiopian, a eunuch, a court official of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, who was in charge of all her treasure. He had come to Jerusalem to worship²⁸ and was returning, seated in his chariot, and he was reading the prophet Isaiah. 29 And the Spirit said to Philip, "Go over and join this chariot." 30 So Philip ran to him and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet and asked, "Do you understand what you are reading?" 31 And he said, "How can I, unless someone guides me?" And he invited Philip to come up and sit with him. 32 Now the passage of the Scripture that he was reading was this:

"Like a sheep he was led to the slaughter and like a lamb before its shearer is silent, so he opens not his mouth. 33 In his humiliation justice was denied him. Who can describe his generation? For his life is taken away from the earth."

34 And the eunuch said to Philip, "About whom, I ask you, does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else?" 35 Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning with this Scripture he told him the good news about Jesus. 36 And as they were going along the road they came to some water, and the eunuch said, "See, here is water! What prevents me from being baptized?"³⁷ 38 And he commanded the chariot to stop, and they both went down into the water, Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him. 39 And when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord carried Philip away, and the eunuch saw him no more, and went on his way rejoicing. 40 But Philip found himself at Azotus, and as he passed through he preached the gospel to all the towns until he came to Caesarea.

DAY 7

Acts 16:25-40

25 About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them, 26 and suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken. And immediately all the doors were opened, and everyone's bonds were unfastened. 27 When the jailer woke and saw that the prison doors were open, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself, supposing that the prisoners had escaped.

APPENDIX

DAY 7 (CONTINUED)

28 But Paul cried with a loud voice, "Do not harm yourself, for we are all here." 29 And the jailer called for lights and rushed in, and trembling with fear he fell down before Paul and Silas. 30 Then he brought them out and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" 31 And they said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household." 32 And they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house. 33 And he took them the same hour of the night and washed their wounds; and he was baptized at once, he and all his family. 34 Then he brought them up into his house and set food before them. And he rejoiced along with his entire household that he had believed in God.

35 But when it was day, the magistrates sent the police, saying, "Let those men go." 36 And the jailer reported these words to Paul, saying, "The magistrates have sent to let you go. Therefore come out now and go in peace." 37 But Paul said to them, "They have beaten us publicly, uncondemned, men who are Roman citizens, and have thrown us into prison; and do they now throw us out secretly? No! Let them come themselves and take us out." 38 The police reported these words to the magistrates, and they were afraid when they heard that they were Roman citizens. 39 So they came and apologized to them. And they took them out and asked them to leave the city. 40 So they went out of the prison and visited Lydia. And when they had seen the brothers, they encouraged them and departed.

DAY 8

Acts 16:11-15

11 So, setting sail from Troas, we made a direct voyage to Samothrace, and the following day to Neapolis, 12 and from there to Philippi, which is a leading city of the district of Macedonia and a Roman colony. We remained in this city some days. 13 And on the Sabbath day we went outside the gate to the riverside, where we supposed there was a place of prayer, and we sat down and spoke to the women who had come together. 14 One who heard us was a woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple goods, who was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to pay attention to what was said by Paul. 15 And after she was baptized, and her household as well, she urged us, saying, "If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come to my house and stay." And she prevailed upon us.

DAY 11

Luke 8:49-56

49 While he was still speaking, someone from the ruler's house came and said, "Your daughter is dead; do not trouble the Teacher any more." 50 But Jesus on hearing this answered him, "Do not fear; only believe, and she will be well." 51 And when he came to the house, he allowed no one to enter with him, except Peter and John and James, and the father and mother of the child. 52 And all were weeping and mourning for her, but he said, "Do not weep, for she is not dead but sleeping." 53 And they laughed at him, knowing that she was dead. 54 But taking her by the hand he called, saying, "Child, arise." 55 And her spirit returned, and she got up at once. And he directed that something should be given her to eat. 56 And her parents were amazed, but he charged them to tell no one what had happened.

APPENDIX

DAY 13 & DAY 27

Acts 3:1-10

1 Now Peter and John were going up to the temple at the hour of prayer, the ninth hour. 2 And a man lame from birth was being carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple that is called the Beautiful Gate to ask alms of those entering the temple. 3 Seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple, he asked to receive alms. 4 And Peter directed his gaze at him, as did John, and said, "Look at us." 5 And he fixed his attention on them, expecting to receive something from them. 6 But Peter said, "I have no silver and gold, but what I do have I give to you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk!" 7 And he took him by the right hand and raised him up, and immediately his feet and ankles were made strong. 8 And leaping up he stood and began to walk, and entered the temple with them, walking and leaping and praising God. 9 And all the people saw him walking and praising God, 10 and recognized him as the one who sat at the Beautiful Gate of the temple, asking for alms. And they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him.

DAY 14

Acts 20:7-12

7 On the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul talked with them, intending to depart on the next day, and he prolonged his speech until midnight. 8 There were many lamps in the upper room where we were gathered. 9 And a young man named Eutychus, sitting at the window, sank into a deep sleep as Paul talked still longer. And being overcome by sleep, he fell down from the third story and was taken up dead. 10 But Paul went down and bent over him, and taking him in his arms, said, "Do not be alarmed, for his life is in him." 11 And when Paul had gone up and had broken bread and eaten, he conversed with them a long while, until daybreak, and so departed. 12 And they took the youth away alive, and were not a little comforted.

DAY 17

Isaiah 53:1-12

1 Who has believed what he has heard from us? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?
2 For he grew up before him like a young plant, and like a root out of dry ground; he had no form or majesty that we should look at him, and no beauty that we should desire him.
3 He was despised and rejected by men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not.
4 Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted.
5 But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed.
6 All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.
7 He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he opened not his mouth.
8 By oppression and judgment he was taken away; and as for his generation, who considered that he was cut off out of the land of the living, stricken for the transgression of my people?

APPENDIX

DAY 17 (CONTINUED)

9 And they made his grave with the wicked and with a rich man in his death, although he had done no violence, and there was no deceit in his mouth.

10 Yet it was the will of the Lord to crush him; he has put him to grief; when his soul makes an offering for guilt, he shall see his offspring; he shall prolong his days; the will of the Lord shall prosper in his hand.

11 Out of the anguish of his soul he shall see and be satisfied; by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities.

12 Therefore I will divide him a portion with the many, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong, because he poured out his soul to death and was numbered with the transgressors; yet he bore the sin of many, and makes intercession for the transgressors.

DAY 18

John 13:3-16

3 Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going back to God, 4 rose from supper. He laid aside his outer garments, and taking a towel, tied it around his waist. 5 Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was wrapped around him. 6 He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, do you wash my feet?" 7 Jesus answered him, "What I am doing you do not understand now, but afterward you will understand." 8 Peter said to him, "You shall never wash my feet." Jesus answered him, "If I do not wash you, you have no share with me." 9 Simon Peter said to him, "Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!" 10 Jesus said to him, "The one who has bathed does not need to wash, except for his feet, but is completely clean. And you are clean, but not every one of you." 11 For he knew who was to betray him; that was why he said, "Not all of you are clean."

12 When he had washed their feet and put on his outer garments and resumed his place, he said to them, "Do you understand what I have done to you? 13 You call me Teacher and Lord, and you are right, for so I am. 14 If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. 15 For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you. 16 Truly, truly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him.

DAY 22

Philippians 2:3-8

3 Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. 4 Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. 5 Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, 6 who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7 but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. 8 And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

APPENDIX

DAY 25

1 John 3:16-24

16 By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers. 17 But if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him? 18 Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth.

19 By this we shall know that we are of the truth and reassure our heart before him; 20 for whenever our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and he knows everything. 21 Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence before God; 22 and whatever we ask we receive from him, because we keep his commandments and do what pleases him. 23 And this is his commandment, that we believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ and love one another, just as he has commanded us. 24 Whoever keeps his commandments abides in God, and God in him. And by this we know that he abides in us, by the Spirit whom he has given us.

DAY 38

Matthew 19:13-15

13 Then children were brought to him that he might lay his hands on them and pray. The disciples rebuked the people, 14 but Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven." 15 And he laid his hands on them and went away.



TIME TO SHARE

is an encouraging and challenging collection of studies about God's people sharing God's love with the world.

This booklet is written by members and clergy of St Mary's, Meadgate and St Paul's churches in Great Baddow. The studies focus on evangelism, looking at how Jesus and his disciples reached out to the world and they aim to inspire us to do the same. Its overriding message is that God is interested in people and so should we be.

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