

THE GRAPEVINE

Where the journeys of our lives come together in fellowship, worship, study and witness

Rely not on yourself

*Rely not on yourselves,
but on God...*

He delivered us...

He will deliver us...

He will continue to deliver us

(2 Corinthians 1:9-11 NIV)

I quit!

I've tried my best to live
as God expects me to
as my family expects me to
I want to do the best,
but I always fail.

I give up!

There's no use trying!

I just fail...

I? I? I? I?

*"Rely not on yourselves,
but on God..."*

He delivered us

He will deliver us

He will continue to deliver us"

Again and again and again
like food,
like sleep,
God will give us strength
every day.

*"Rely not on yourselves,
but on God"*



Pastoral Musing

Every year seems to roll by quicker than the previous year. The speed at which January 2015 has rolled by, this year is poised to move quickly! Don't know what is in store for us, but I am reinvigorated in my belief of our "responsibility of prayer".

We are in the throes of an election year. The starting gun has been heard and the roar of claims and counterclaims, declarations and promises, and virulent and vitriolic exchanges grows louder.

At a time like this, I am reminded when, the people of Israel asked their spiritual leader Samuel to, ask God to given them a king, to judge us like all the nations. God reassured Samuel, They have not rejected you, but they have rejected Me from being king over them. Guided by God's wisdom, Samuel warns them, a king, like all kings and rulers, would take everything from them, and you shall be his slaves.

The people of Israel persist in their demand until Samuel tells them, I have obeyed your voice ... and have made a king over you. In his farewell remarks, he reminds them of the history of their relationship with God, how God delivered them, how they disobeyed and floundered as a nation as a result, how the love of God rescued them again, and again, and each time they soon forgot what God had done and became like the people of the nations around them.

In his closing remarks, Samuel says, And you shall know and see that your wickedness is great, which you have done in the sight of the Lord, in asking for yourselves, a king. People realise their grave error, repent, and ask Samuel to pray for them, that all may not die for the sin of their request, which was to reject God as their King.

Samuel calms their fears and makes a statement, which when I first read, sent a shiver down my spine: **Moreover, as for me, far**



Ladies in Fellowship Together (LIFT)

We meet on the last Wednesday of the month at 7.30 p.m. We usually meet at the home of Narola but are always open to a new topic and change of venue.

25 February at Narola's

Pam Gee talks about her trip to Nagaland, India, with her grandchildren, visiting the place where she was born, and she lived as a child.

25 March at Margaret's

A selection of greetings cards by a friend of Chris White.

29 April TBA

27 May at Janet's

An evening of craft with Sally
If you have ideas or suggestions for a forthcoming LIFT Meeting please speak to Narola. Maybe you have a skill you can share or know somebody who could come and talk to us about their interests or profession.

STAMPS

Doreen received a letter from BMS thanking her for the stamps she sent over the last year. BMS raised £13,750 from the sale of stamps, postcards and coins sent by Churches. Many thanks for all of you who saved stamps for Doreen, and to Doreen for all the work of sorting, cutting etc.

Pastoral Musing (cont'd)

be it from me that I should sin against the Lord by ceasing to pray for you.

Read the sentence slowly and let the words sink in. Samuel:

prays - Samuel's relationship with God is built through a dialogue of prayer, every moment of everyday, over a lifetime.

prays for those God has put him contact (I pray for you), and Samuel takes this as his serious responsibility.

recognises the danger of ceasing to pray, which would result in a dangerous spiritual vacuum.

is committed to praying for those whom God has put him in contact - far be it from me to cease praying for you.

believes in the Holiness of prayer: to stop praying is to sin against God.

I have heard it said, and I am sure you have too, pundits cannot call this election and all bets are off. At this moment in time in our nation's journey, if we don't want a leader like the (other) nations, we are faced with an urgent need to be undergirded by unceasing prayer, praying responsibly as Samuel did: far be it from us that we should sin against the Lord by ceasing to pray for our nation and each other.

Ceaseless prayer is the need of the hour, but we also need God's wisdom to make our choices, for which, Samuel has one more lesson to teach us. When he is about to hand-pick and consecrate Israel's second and greatest king, God says to him, Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature ... For the LORD sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart.

A person seeking public office, promises "to serve people". There is, however, a great misunderstanding between our expectation and their offer, to serve.

May we take this opportunity to strengthen our prayer relationship with God; may God reveal to us what He sees in the hearts of those who promise to serve us, and may we be spared of foolish decisions.

Let our ceaseless praying begin with the humble petition, **Lord, hear our prayer; Lord, grant us YOUR wisdom!**

Yours in the blessing of prayer,

Kalyan

PS: the Samuel story above may be found in 1 Samuel chapters 8, 12 and 16.

Diary

- Feb 08 Bayworth at Botley
Lunch at Flowing Well
- 18 Lent Service 10.30am
- 15 George Pearce
- 27 Bob Harris speaking
at Cumnor Historical
Society 7.30 pm
- Mar 04 Deacon's Retreat
- 29 Palm Sunday
Songs of Praise
- Apr 02 Maundy Thursday
- 03 Good Friday
- 04 Holy Saturday
- 05 Sunrise service 6.am
Bayworth Common
Easter Service

LENT

On 18 February (Ash Wednesday) at 10 a.m. a worship service observes the start of Lent. Kalyan has offered to lead a discussion on Thursday mornings during Lent, starting 19th February (10-11am), exploring our Christian faith. This will be discussion a group

A Reminder ...

All the water in the world,
However hard it tries
Can never sink
the smallest ship,
Unless it gets inside.
All the evil in the world,
The blackest kind of sin
Can never hurt you
in the least,
Unless you let it in.

Contributed by Janet Harris

Secretary's Notes

Time to try and get my brain back in gear after the long break. Christmas is always busy, but this last one seems to have been more disjointed and hectic than most, perhaps because 2014 was for us a more hectic church year than most. The West Way development project caused so much dissent, and still rumbles on. The joys of a Baptism, the sorrows at the funerals of three long standing church members, the stimulus of trying out both a new format for church-meetings and starting a Saturday evening family/messy church. No wonder there was some mix-ups over some services and events over the Christmas period. So we had better up our game and get all information out in good time.

Reminder number one, it was agreed that the next two church meetings would be in the last weeks of February and May. So, next Church Meeting Sunday 22nd February. Immediately after the morning service. Remain for a fellowship lunch and discussion, £5 per head.

Reminder number two, there will be a sunrise Easter morning service again this year, Sunday 5th April on the Village Green Sunningwell. Retire to Bayworth Chapel for coffee and croissants.

Reminder number three, the next deacons' meeting will be Thursday February 12th.so any concerns, points you would like raised at church meeting, etc. contact one of the deacons soon. Who are we ? Marian Woodward; Christine White; Janet Harris; Penny Allen and Ted Beaver. Would you like to be more involved ? We would welcome another deacon. Talk to us.

Reminder number four, (and yes I do know I'm nagging) please refer to Grape Vine, hang on and refer to service sheets, and listen to notices for any updates or unavoidable alterations.

A lot has been happening in and around the fellowship these past few weeks, both good news and not so good for members and families, but I'll leave that for Kalyan's Family News slot. A joint churches together service at St. Michaels Cumnor. A joint churches together Barn Dance and social at the new Dean Court Social centre, both well attended and successful in raising funds for the Food Bank and Syrian Refugee Relief.

Let us look forward to the rest of 2015, hoping that the local regeneration project can still go ahead, with the improved accommodation for Field House residents, and a sensible balance of facilities to meet the needs that the extra housing will require.

Ted

Birthdays

- 17th Alan Woodward
 19th Wendy Rich
 20th Geoffrey England
 26th Joan Neller

Communion Table

February 1st & 15th

Angela

March 1st & 15th

Kalyan & Narola

April 5th & 19th

Ted and Jean

Coffee Mornings

February

- 07 Ann
 17 Gillian
 21 Jean and Fred
 28 Marian and Margaret

March

- 07 Ann
 17 Gillian
 21 Jean and Fred
 28 Marian and Margaret

Meetings

Tuesdays 7.30 pm

*Bible Study:
 Gospel of John*

Thursdays 10 am

*Sermon discussion group
 at Church*

Family News



January has witnessed a flurry of activity in our church family in and around Botley.

Wendy Rich has had a difficult time in and out of hospital recently, but Louise says she is good spirits and getting better. Bob has taken up residence in the new dementia unit in Abingdon (opposite the community hospital) and is well cared for there.

Holli's operation was successful. She was active contacting friends the day after, but is experiencing breathing some difficulty which should soon be attended to. The plan is for her to be back home by the end of January. We also remember Ann who has been with Holli in London; pray for health and strength for her.

Prom had the cataract removed from her left eye and is doing well. She is happy with the news that she would soon, not have to wear spectacles!

Geoffrey and Mary are well. Mary conveys her sincere thanks to those who sent her birthday greetings, including everyone at Church. She continues to struggle with a weak and painful right shoulder. Geoffrey is able to move her from room to room in a wheelchair, and he is also able to drive himself to the hospital for his appointments and also to get their meds. They send their warm greetings to everyone.

We remember Ted and Jean as they travel to London and back more frequently. Pray for health and strength for them both, and daughter Ann.

I saw Walter Dachau walking down Finmore Road; he is back from Poland earlier than I thought he said. Good to have him back!

Hedley says Elaine is doing better. We remember them both in our thoughts and prayers and pray a speedy recovery for Elaine and strength for Hedley.

Sarah is back in Oxford. This is her last year at Brookes; she finishes this summer and is gearing up for the onslaught of job applications. Pray she finishes well and gets a job that keeps her in the Oxford area so that she can continue to be in fellowship with us!

We have missed James Seyani in our midst. James is in Malawi attending to personal matters and his wife Nancy has joined him there. Malawi has experienced severe flooding, receiving two months' rainfall in the span of two days. Their daughter Memory says they and their families are well, not affected by the deluge of rain. James is expected back in Oxford in March.

Cello Recital

The Oxford Centre for Mission Studies is holding a cello recital on Saturday 7 February at 7pm, to raise money for the restoration works desperately needed to our beautiful building. The crucial works to the windows alone are going to cost us over £200,000.

Orlando Jopling is the musical director of the Royal Orchestra Society and has conducted the English Chamber Orchestra, the Irish Chamber Orchestra and the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra. He has also conducted over 25 opera productions and co-founded the Stanley Hall Opera. So it's a treat for us to have him come to OCMS!

Tickets will be £17.50 and will include a glass of champagne and canapes on arrival. Please do come.

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Family News (cont'd)

Mary Timbrell was not well. When I last spoke with her she was recovering well from a very bad bout of the flu. Boda Solomon, our friend in Hyderabad, India (whose daughter Naomi was here studying for her Master's degree, now back home and married last year), conducted a successful two day retreat for 126 young people starting Uni. We were privileged to help contribute towards the cost of the programme.

The first Monday in February (2nd) is the day that BMS staff and mission personnel around the world set apart annually to pray together for their work. It's a huge encouragement for them to know that many churches will also pray with them on the Day of Prayer itself, in Sunday services, in prayer groups or in personal prayer times. Please join them in prayer on this day especially. If you could like more information of BMS' work or resources to help you pray, I am happy to download these for you. Please ask.

This year is the turn of Bayworth Chapel to conduct the Easter sunrise service and they suggest we meet at The Village Green (Sunningwell OX13 6RD directly opposite the Sunningwell Village Hall and Car Park, to the right of St Leonard's Church) at 6:15 am, followed by "bring and share breakfast (at 7:00 am) so everyone has what they want, but Bayworth will provide croissants as well as tea and coffee", and closing with a short communion service at 7:30 am. If anyone would like transport please see me or one of the Deacons. We will have our Easter service as normal at 10:30 am.

Before we close, many of you will remember Rev McNeil, the kind old gentleman from North Hinksey, who would buy our cakes for the several people he looked after in his home. On Saturday 17th January, his daughter visited us to say Rev McNeil died earlier that week. I have just learned, his funeral will be held at SS Peter and Paul on Monday 9th February at noon.

Let me leave you with three little words which has to me, been a source of great encouragement. Whenever you face difficulties or troubles, or find yourself struggling, with people, issues or loneliness, let the three words "but God can...." remind and encourage you of God's unquestioned willingness to do what is needed to help you through. Remember: Everything God does is a miracle; nothing God does is not a miracle!

May the love of God be yours in abundance everyday!

Kalyan



from Chris White

Vale House Christmas Bazaar was held on the same day as the Christmas Bazaar here. It made between £2,000 - £3,000 and was held in St. Peter & St. Paul's Church Hall. Vale House moved from Botley to Sandford on Thames about 3 years ago but some Botley volunteers still volunteer at Sandford including Ann Flegg (who usually sits next to Celia Day in Church). If you would like to know more about the work of Vale House ask Ann and if anyone wants to know, it is almost opposite the Four Pillars Hotel in Sanford.

FRIENDS OF THE STROKE CLUB

Ann is also involved with this, so again, if you want to know more you only have to ask Ann.

Thanks to Marian for ensuring those who can no longer get to Church were given plants or the like at Christmas so that they knew that they haven't been forgotten. Thanks also to Janet for decorating the Church so artistically at Christmas (and Bob, 'cos he helped her!)

We continue to remember Joan Slatter and family on the death of her brother, Basil.

A member of South Oxford Baptist Church, Betty Beasley, died just before Christmas. Betty was never well enough to worship with us at Botley but was very involved in South Oxford leading the Woman's Fellowship there for many years. She and Clem Day were friends, both coming from Scotland, when they were young. Nick Wood 'took' her funeral.

Chris

The Key

Zig Ziglar, American author, salesman and motivational speaker, tells the story about an elderly man playing an organ in a cathedral in Europe. He was playing sad and melancholy music. It was sad because this was his last day as organist of the cathedral. He was being replaced by a younger musician.

At dusk, somebody stepped into the cathedral. Seeing the younger man, the organist stopped playing, locked the organ and slipped the key into his pocket. He was approached by the young man, who simply said, "Please, the key."

On receiving the key, the young organist went to the organ and began to play. While the old man had played beautifully and skilfully, the young man played with sheer genius. Music such as the world had never heard came rolling out of that beautiful old organ.

This was the world's introduction to the music of Johann Sebastian Bach. The old man, with tears in his eyes, reflected, "Suppose - just suppose - I had not given the master the key!"

Its a question worth asking: Have you given the Master the key, or are you clutching it in your pocket? If you give Him the key, then watch and listen as The Master unlocks the mysteries of His creation and draws you into it!

Perhaps then, you will not ever think of asking the question, **Why?** Instead, when the Master asks for the Key, your response would be, **Why not!**



How to understand the Bible

"How to Understand the Bible" is a series found on www.biblegateway.com. It is an excellent introduction to the Bible, which we often read as a series of disjointed stories. Extract below is taken from the section *How to Understand the Old Testament* which many of us find difficult, and addresses the difficult bit about "The Law".

Most people who start to read the Bible from the beginning for the first time will typically have this experience: Genesis is fascinating with the story of creation, Babel, the flood, and the epic stories of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The exodus story is gripping. And then comes the law. Mount Sinai and the Ten Commandments are familiar. Next come the flurry of laws and stipulations, many of which are so far removed from our culture and hard to understand that the Bible reader can get bogged down. Mid-Leviticus, typically.

What is "the law"? What is the purpose of the more than 600 regulations? And, very importantly, how much of this applies to our lives? Why do we believe that "You shall not commit adultery" in the Ten Commandments applies to us but "Do not wear clothing woven of two kinds of material" does not?

In Scripture "the law" may refer to the more than 600 regulations Moses passed on to the people in Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy, or it may refer to the first five books of the Bible, or as shorthand for the entire pattern of religious life and rituals in the Old Testament. Law is a way for any society to define the proper bounds of behavior both for protection and for flourishing. But the law of the Old Testament is unique in that it was God's way of shaping his relationship with a covenant people.

This will help us understand the sometimes bewildering array of laws, some of which seem strange to us. The Hebrews were chosen to live in a distinctive way by how they dressed, what they ate, and how they worshipped. Most of these laws do not carry over after the coming of Christ, when the old covenant gave way to the new covenant, and the way of living in obedience to God comes via a higher kind of law.

In Exodus through Deuteronomy there are three kinds of laws. First, there are *civil regulations*, for instance, property rights; marriage and divorce standards; laws sanctioning theft, murder, and other crimes; health regulations; etc. Then there are *ritual instructions* that define the sacrificial system, the festivals, the role of the Levites, and the specific physical features of the tabernacle. Finally, there are *moral principles*, which include sexual ethics, the major themes of the Ten Commandments, and more. These three types are sometimes called the civil law, the ceremonial law, and the moral law.

So how do we know which of the 600 laws in the Old Testament apply to Christians today? Should we avoid eating shellfish? Ought we to observe Passover? Is it wrong to steal? Do we have to observe the Sabbath (i.e., rest on the seventh day of the week, Saturday)? Are sexual relations between blood relatives wrong? Is tithing (i.e., giving 10 percent of your income) an eternal commandment?

We have to answer this question on something better than our intuitions. The terms of the new covenant must guide us here, and what we find in the New Testament is that the civil law was God's way of shaping Hebrew society; it's not binding today. The ritual law used sacrifice and festivals and the tabernacle to teach lessons about sin and atonement, but it has now been superseded by the work of Christ. (See the teaching in the New Testament book of Hebrews.) Moral laws have ongoing validity, but mostly because they are repeated in one form or another in the New Testament.

(continued on next page)

BMS News

Generous donations from BMS World Mission supporters have helped to rebuild communities on the Filipino island of Panay devastated by Typhoon Haiyan in November 2013.

Money raised by the BMS Philippines appeal has bought food and water that have been distributed through BMS partner Asia Pacific Baptist Aid (APB Aid). It has also enabled APB Aid to support the building of over 570 houses, with 650 more due to be constructed. This has been done by supplying families with help from local volunteers. APB Aid is also helping people recover their livelihoods.

Farmer's fields, livestock and equipment were destroyed by Typhoon Haiyan – so, as they prepare to plant new crops, APB Aid are supplying them with crop seeds as well as livestock and poultry.



How to understand the Bible (cont'd)

But lest we repeat the legalism and self-righteousness of the Pharisees and teachers of the law of Jesus' day, we are guided in the new covenant by this one transcendent principle: the law of love or "the law of Christ" (Gal. 6:2). Jesus said the whole old covenant law can be summed up by "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind" and "Love your neighbor as yourself" (Matt. 22:37-40). Paul put it this way: "the entire law is fulfilled in keeping this one command: 'Love your neighbor as yourself'" (Gal. 5:14), and "love is the fulfillment of the law" (Rom. 13:8-10).

It would be reasonable to ask: "So if most of the Law in the first five books of the Bible does not apply to us today, in what sense is it part of the word of God for us?" Here is where we need to set aside all self-centeredness. The whole sweep of the biblical narrative is the story of God moving among and within people in order to bring salvation to humanity, but that doesn't mean every verse is about us. The law of the Old Testament is the word of God for all people for all time, but given to specific people groups in the context of God's dynamic, upward development of a covenant relationship with human beings. The apostle Paul puts it this way: "The law was our guardian [custodian, tutor] until Christ came that we might be justified by faith" (Gal. 3:24).

So the law stands as a true expression of the will and the ways of God, expressed in a particular era, subject to modification, providing the basis for ever higher revelations of what it means to be the covenant people of God. Jesus summed it up when he said: "I have not come to abolish [the Law or the Prophets] but to fulfill them" (Matt. 5:17).

BMS News from ...

LEBANON - Feeding Syrian refugees in Lebanon. Over 400 men, women and children will have clear water, food and hygiene supplies thanks to a grant from BMS World Mission to local Christian partner organisation, the Lebanese Society for Education and Social Development. The money will be given to families who currently do not receive food aid and will allow ongoing dietary support for 60 families as well as nutritional and hygiene aid to 100 families with young children for a period of six months.

PERU - Planting seeds in people's lives - from Perthshire to Peru. Sarah McArthur will be using her plant knowledge she developed in Scotland in the Amazon Jungle with BMS. I have been working in garden centres and garden nurseries for over 15 years and for the last five years I was a plant propagator at Glendoick Gardens in Perthshire. My general job included propagation from cuttings, seedlings and grafting. I loved my job and working outside in the amazing surroundings I felt was such an honour. I now find myself in Peru with BMS, just finishing up my language learning and getting ready to head off into the Amazon Jungle. I have been asked to be involved with various tasks, including planting of vegetable gardens, propagating cashew trees and some teaching along the lines of creation care.

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in
Botley
Oxford**

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Prayer Diary

Sunday	February 1 st	Revd Kalyan Das taking service today
Monday	February 2 nd	Drivers of public transport
Tuesday	February 3 rd	Susan Costar; Georgina Croot
Wednesday	February 4 th	Visitors to patients in hospital
Thursday	February 5 th	All in Local and National Government
Friday	February 6 th	Those doing Baptist Missionary work
Saturday	February 7 th	Friends who live far away
Sunday	February 8 th	Revd Kalyan Das taking service today
Monday	February 9 th	The emergency services
Tuesday	February 10 th	Walter Dalchau; Celia Day
Wednesday	February 11 th	The blessing of human love
Thursday	February 12 th	Those who deliver post, papers and milk
Friday	February 13 th	All who have recently lost a loved one
Saturday	February 14 th	The joy of love on Valentine's Day
Sunday	February 15 th	George Pearce taking service today
Monday	February 16 th	Churches working together in our area
Tuesday	February 17 th	Kalyan, Narola Das and family
Wednesday	February 18 th	The start of Lent
Thursday	February 19 th	For daily guidance from God
Friday	February 20 th	The Scouts meeting at the Church
Saturday	February 21 st	For all conducting worship this weekend
Sunday	February 22 nd	Revd Kalyan Das taking service today
Monday	February 23 rd	All those facing hospital appointments
Tuesday	February 24 th	Clem Day
Wednesday	February 25 th	For a listening ear
Thursday	February 26 th	Those who arrange flowers in Church
Friday	February 27 th	Cumnor Historical Society Dinner
Saturday	February 28 th	For emerging signs of Spring

If you have something you would like to share - a recollection, a reflection, an observation, the way things were, What's On or a newsworthy item etc., please send/give it to Gillian, Ted Beaver or Kalyan Das.

Thank you.

Gillian Guest

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