


Oct-Dec 2007

Newsletter

Thought - "Forgiveness and Blame Culture"

Forgiveness is fundamental to the Christian faith but we live in a culture of blame. Blame culture is nothing new, Adam blamed Eve for his sin right back there in Genesis chapter 3; *"The woman you put here with me - she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it."*

The idea of forgiveness flies in the face of natural human instinct. When we've been wronged or violated in some way we want to seek revenge, have our rights upheld, and get compensation.

Many people feel that to forgive is a soft option, but nothing could be further from the truth. Whilst it's easy to blame someone it's really hard to forgive; you have to battle with your own emotions, swallow your pride and show love to an individual to whom you have no earthly reason to show it.

So how can we achieve this difficult task of being able to forgive? The first step is being aware of our own need for forgiveness. Jesus told a story in the Bible about a master and his servant. The servant owed millions of pounds (or the equivalent of it). Since he was not able to pay, the master ordered that he and his wife and his children and all that he had be sold to repay the debt.

"The servant fell on his knees before him. 'Be patient with me,' he begged, 'and I will pay back everything.' The servant's master took pity on him, cancelled the debt and let him go. But when that servant went out, he found one of his fellow-servants who owed him a hundred denarii. He grabbed him and began to choke him. 'Pay back what you owe me!' he demanded. His fellow-servant fell to his knees and begged him, 'Be patient with me, and I will pay you back.' But he refused. Instead, he went off and had the man thrown into prison until he could pay the debt. When the other servants saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed and went and told their master everything that had happened. Then the master called the servant in. 'You wicked servant,' he said, 'I cancelled all that debt of yours because you begged me to. Shouldn't you have had mercy on your fellow-servant just as I had on you?'"*

(* 100 denarii is worth less than £10) Matthew chapter 18 verses 26-33 - NIV

The master in this story is God and we are the first servant. As children of God we owe him a great debt because we continually behave in a way that hurts him. Yet despite all this he loves us and continually forgives us because he wants to be close to us and have a relationship with us.

When we have been shown such kindness by God, do we have any right to hold back forgiveness from others? As we move towards God, recognizing our need for forgiveness and accepting his love we can be changed. We can become people who are able to truly forgive others from the heart.

The Bible Course - a personal perspective ...

"In August 1999 I saw an advert in my local paper for a six week "learn to read the Bible" course. I had recently become a Christian and hoped that this course would help me to find out more about God and the Bible.

I really enjoyed the six week course - the tutors did exactly what they said they would and explained how the Bible fitted together, and how to read the Bible so that it makes sense. I have continued attending the class ever since, and when my wife retired, she started going with me. We have read the books of Exodus, Mark's gospel, Acts, Hebrews and Romans and more. Some of them have been quite difficult but it always leaves you wanting to know more.

After some years I decided to visit their church, called the Bethel, and have found there a great atmosphere for learning more about God's love for me. I'm really glad that I saw that advert and started going to the class. If anyone asks me why I like to go to the class and the Bethel, I say you should go and find out for yourself!"



What's On?

(At Henrietta St. unless otherwise stated)

Sunday evening Services at 2:45 1st Sunday of the month and 6:00 pm at other times.

DATE	SUBJECT
7-Oct	Harvest Family Service (2:45)
14-Oct	"What the papers say" / Newspaper night
21-Oct	<i>Guest Speaker</i>
28-Oct	What does God really say about... Star signs, Mediums & Black magic
4-Nov	Jesus - the facts "Why we needed him to come" (2:45)
11-Nov	Remembrance Sunday Service
18-Nov	<i>Guest Speaker</i>

DATE	SUBJECT
25-Nov	Don't be afraid just believe
2-Dec	Jesus - the facts "Why we need him to come back" (2:45)
9-Dec	God's guide to de-stress
16-Dec	Family Nativity Service
23-Dec	Carol Service
30-Dec	People Jesus met: Anna & Simeon

Bible Course:

"the Bible course" is about to start a new session on Sep 25th. At Chorlton Adult Education Centre. "the Bible course" is a free 8 week course learning to read and understand the Bible. For more information see www.thebiblecourse.com or call 0161 881 0762 or 877 7569.

Regulars:

- Sunday
 - Breaking of Bread Service 10:30 a.m.
 - Youth Church 2:45 p.m. (From Kids aged 3 up to Adult Discussion Group)
 - Evening Service 2:45 p.m. or 6:00 p.m. (See above for details)
- Tuesday
 - Junior Youth club 6:45 p.m.
- Thursday
 - "The Bible Course" 7:15 p.m. at Chorlton Adult Education Centre.
 - "Playtime" Parent & Toddler group 10am-12pm (Term time only)
 - Bible Class 8:00 p.m.
- Friday
 - Senior Youth Club 7:30 p.m.

Web site: www.thebethel.org Email: info@thebethel.org