

St. John Baptist Church Membury – Bible Sunday
Sunday 29th October 2017

Earlier this week Sammie our youngest son came bounding the stairs, “Mum, Mum look what I’ve found, do you remember when I made this at camp a few summers ago?” I did remember - Psalm 119:162 ‘I rejoice in your word like one who discovers a great treasure.’

Today on Bible Sunday I wonder what God is saying about His treasure?

In the Bidding Prayer we prayed:

Bidding prayer:

Thank you, Almighty God, for the Bible.

May it be like a torch for our lives, showing us which way to go.

Showing us how to live.

May it be a light and strength for each day.

Use us to love and serve others in the power of all you are,

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

In the name of your Son Jesus Christ our Lord

Amen

Powerful let's use this to shape our thinking

1. May your word be like a torch for our lives, showing us which way to go.

Run / Head torch at night shows me the way to run /it illuminates my path / trip hazards / lights up brambles / warns me / safe / see the way to go in the darkness/ - but also warns others I am coming / it illuminates me and keeps me safe from cars, pedestrians.. dogs not on leads.... Keep us in the light and not in the darkness...

2. May your word be a light and strength for each day, showing us how to live.

I wonder how that is going for each of us?

Over the years I've used many helpful tools to dig deep into the treasure, daily notes, books, Celtic Daily Prayer books, a long and growing list of resources - at the moment I am being nourished by 'the Bible In a Year' App on my phone, put together by Rev Nicky Gumbel and the team at Holy Trinity Brompton in London.

Every morning I wake up before my family/ ritual/ pot of tea/ sit and listen / Look at phone: Audio setting /Voices of Nicky Gumbel/David Suchet / minister to my soul....

Intro/Proverbs or Psalm / commentary / NT Bible Reading / NT Commentary / OT Bible Reading / OT Commentary / Pippa Adds

For this season, God is using this Audio Bible to **nourish** me daily, I can pause, rewind, make notes journal/ It's nourishing, encouraging me, building me / a light and definitely strength for the day

In 2 Timothy 3:16 the apostle Paul describes all Scripture as 'God-breathed' The Bible is not just inspired in the way that artists, poets and composers are said to be inspired. It actually has God's breath, his Spirit, in it. Through the Bible, God speaks to you and to me, loud and clear! That is my experience at the moment!

How are you and I being nourished by God's Word on a daily basis? I've have periods in my life of being mal-nourished, dry, parched and perhaps even spiritually anorexic? sounds stark I don't think I've experienced the opposite - being spiritually obese if there is such a thing? having fed on the word so much there never being any action/response/overflow as in serving God.....

Pause

On Bible Sunday as we gather to celebrate His God-breathed word

Lord am I spiritually nourished by your Word?
Lord am I spiritually mal-nourished of your Word?
Lord am I spiritually obese on your Word?

Lord on Bible Sunday what am I this morning?

PAUSE

I believe that we live in exciting times, to quote CS Lewis in the Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe, the winter is over in this nation, the queen is dead, spring is here and Aslan is on the move.....across GB

I believe that we stand in the wake of the prayers, the faithfulness and the obedience of our foremothers and forefathers of our faith in Christ Jesus "Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is done in heaven." in Great Britain, people being healed, people being set free from addiction, the lost are finding salvation and the lonely finding deep friendship, stories of God's blessing overflowing, his shield of favour outpouring into cities, towns, villages and valley's just like ours....

Aslan is on the move, we are seeing signs of God's kingdom breaking in..

As the Church of Jesus Christ rises up, as an army we have to be ready. My husband is a Chaplain in the Royal Marines, the best fighting force in world, high calibre, intelligent, sharp, physically fit soldiers..the best - our Royal Marines do not put low calibre, low intelligent, slovenly, half asleep, non-trained soldiers on the front line.....

As foot soldiers, we need to be fighting fit, to know our spiritual armour that Paul talks about in Ephesians 6 inside out the Word of God is the sword of the Spirit, a vital part of our armour, and we need to know it, we need to be nourished by it, allowing it to be our light, our strength and our sword.

On Bible Sunday, I'm convinced that God is saying 'this my army is a call to arms' and the growing sense of Unity and Partnership across the churches in GB like never before in Church History is supernatural, a sense of honouring one another's traditions and being nourished by those traditions, working together across those traditions - has got to be supernatural, we need to be armed with His Word.

Today / honestly how are we each doing?

Do we feel **nourished** by God's Word, If that's you then be encouraged, keep going, keep digging in to the treasure...

Do we feel **mal-nourished**, starving for God's Word, then reach out, open up your Bible, get some great resources to help you,

It might be that a few of us are running ragged, doing, doing, doing out of good heart maybe, doing great stuff for God, but no time to sit with God and to be nourished by His beautiful, life-giving word.... If that's you or me.... then stop, sit and dig in...

Some of us might feel **overnourished**, obese, blocked up on God's word, is there such a thing? It's great to feast on the word, BUT where is the overflow of the forgiven soul in our lives, impacting our communities? We cannot hoard the treasure to ourselves...

3. Use us to love and serve others in the power of all you are, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

I see how God is using me to love and to serve others here in Axminster, at Ordination I sent out by the local Baptist churches to do a piece of research for a year. What was God saying about Axminster? In November 2015 the year started when my lovely team of 12, 8 adults and 4 children gathered around our dining room table to eat, pray, break bread and be sent out together. Every month that was our pattern, gathering back at the table - 12 months later, in November 2016, we had 7 outcomes that God had shown us with clarity.

1. Working closely with Axminster Churches Together
2. Unity and Prayer (MF, ACT Prayer Gathering - Unity across the churches)
3. Police - establish The Axminster RISE Hub / chaplain
4. Pippins Community Centre

5. Work amongst Men / Maintenance Team / Men in Sheds
6. Baby and Toddler Group with Singing – vision that they would become our Youth Group / parents
7. A Worshipping Community

I could stay here all day and tell you many wonderful stories about each and every one of the 7 outcomes, and how we are working on number 7 and are church plant training, to plant a new community into Pippins...

Lots of Stories, Aslan on the move, signs of God's Kingdom breaking in

For me, the crux of the whole thing, as a foot soldier in the army of Jesus Christ that is rising up in this nation is that I can not and will not and shall not do this all in my own strength. Proverbs 3:6 'Lean not on your own understanding and he will make your path straight' - I have to lean into God, F,S,HS - which means leaning into His word, His treasure, His book.

Mike Pilivachi founder of Soul Survivor said: Don't settle for superficial Christianity. It's the most boring thing in the world. Go for broke. Ask God to take you deeper.

I love what I do, I'm Baptist Minister functioning as a Community Pioneer Minister, at the grass roots, in amongst some people facing tough situations, in a role that God has designed perfectly for me, I don't want to be a superficial Christian, I want God to take me deeper, and I can not do it without his fuel, without digging deep every single day.....

For me on Bible Sunday, it is a call to arms by our loving God, F, S, HS, to dig deep into His Word 'being a people that rejoice in His word like one who discovers a great treasure.' and the overflow is reaching the nation of GB for Him and joining in with His story, the God who IS love, the God who sent His son Jesus to die for each of us so that we might live, the God who IS Mission, and for us to hang on to his coattails and join in with what He is already doing in our communities. Joining in with His Kingdom that is certainly breaking in....

Amen

Bidding prayer:

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 Showing us how to live.
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 Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
 In the name of your Son Jesus Christ our Lord
Amen

Let me pray for you using your prayer from the beginning / . Let me pray for you as God's people and Clive as your leader for such a time as this

