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| ALLERTON  CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH |



Taken at Chellow Dene 25/06/2020 by DJM

August/September 2022 Newsletter

Dear Friends

Theology, in some circles, is treated a bit like a ‘swear word’ – something undesirable and not to be talked about! However, at its most basic and practical level, it is simply talking about God. Every time we sing a hymn we are singing theology. On each occasion we talk about the Bible we are doing theology. If we have a talk with a friend about God we are engaging in theology. It’s something we all do, even if we don’t use the word ‘theology’ to describe it. Not only is it something we all do, but it’s something that we must do. What we think and say about God matters. So what is God truly like?

In order to answer that question we also need to ask ourselves where should we look for helpful information about God. First and foremost I believe we should look to the Scriptures as it through the written Word of God that He has revealed Himself to us down through the ages. In the Old Testament God revealed Himself to various people such as Abraham, Samuel, David and the prophets. In doing so He showed them something of Himself, and what He is like. These encounters are recorded for us in the pages of Scripture, so that we also may learn about God, the One who made us, sustains us and redeems us.

Recently I came across the following quotation from the Nineteenth Century Anglican Bishop of Liverpool, JC Ryle. This is what he wrote,

“Beware of manufacturing a God of your own: a God who is all mercy, but not just; a God who is all love, but not holy; a God who has a heaven for everybody, but a hell for none; a God who can allow good and bad to be side by side in time, but will make no distinction between good and bad in eternity. Such a God is an idol of your own, as truly an idol as any snake or crocodile in an Egyptian temple. The hands of your own fancy and sentimentality have made him. He is not the God of the Bible, and beside the God of the Bible there is no God at all.”

(JC Ryle, Consider Your Ways)

Ryle makes several really good points here from which I think we can all learn something. First of all we must be cautious about any picture of God that focuses on His love only. For several decades the most common way that God is described by people is as a God of love. Clearly this is true and there are many passages in the Bible that proclaim this wonderful truth – God is loving and that’s precisely why we can know Him. However, we must not forget that He is also holy and just. God simply cannot ignore our sin and say to us that it doesn’t matter because it most certainly does. He sent His Son into this world to die in our place and pay the price for our sin so that we might receive His grace, love and forgiveness.

Secondly, Ryle alerts us to the danger of trying to create a God in our own image, or according to our own preferences. When we say that God is love, for example, but deny that He is just and holy, we have created an idol. That ‘god’ is not the God of the Bible, the true and living God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. The sin of idolatry is putting something other than God in God’s rightful place, whether it’s another ‘deity’, a special person, a hobby or our own untrue idea of what God is like. God simply is who He has revealed Himself to be, and so any time we deny that we are committing the sin of idolatry.

Let me flesh this out a little. There are some things that I’m sure we would like to know about God that we simply do not know. In areas like this we can think and reflect about God, and as long as it does not contradict anything that God has shown us about Himself then that may be true. However, it’s best not to hold on to that too dearly, as equally we might be wrong. There are many things that we do know about God from the Bible, and when we think or speak about those things we are talking about biblical theology, which I would suggest is good theology. However, when we start to go off on flights of fantasy, trying to imagine what God might be like, without reference to His Word, we are likely to find ourselves going off the beaten track into ‘bad’ theology.

It is best, I believe, to stick to what God has already told us about Himself as it is written down in the Bible. We can try to explain it in simple language, and that’s a really good thing to do. We can try to illustrate exactly what God is like too, as some of the great hymns try to do. Theology can be hard, but it is important and essential for us to ‘do it’ as followers of Jesus. Let us be informed by Scripture and helped to understand it by the Holy Spirit. Then we will find that we are doing theology well.

Yours, Fred

Secretary’s Thoughts

We still need to get back into the habit of putting names on the Coffee and Readers’ Rotas.

We held our last Thursday Fellowship for the summer – we will restart on 1st September – ususal times of 12.30 pm.

Everyone welcome. Well? Come!

We are beginning to put together dates for Coffee Mornings. We are away for 2 Saturdays in September and on 10th September we have a wedding in Church. Hopefully, we will be able to hold our first coffee morning of the autumn on Saturday 1st October. More details later.

Bradford District Scouts are going to start rehearsing for their Gang Show, which they will be holding later in the year. Put Saturday 19th November in your diaries – something to look forward to!

Janet

Dates for your Diary

Thursday 1st September – Thursday Fellowship 12.30 pm

Saturday 1st October – Coffee Morning 10.00 am

Saturday 19th November – Scout Gang Show – time later

Janet

Flower Rota – flowers provided by:

Sunday 7 August The Hastings Family

Sunday 14 August Mr & Mrs Breen

Sunday 21 August Mr & Mrs C Roper

Sunday 11 September Mrs B Lowther

Sunday 18 September Mr & Mrs A Jones

On Sundays not listed, silk flowers will be used.

Preaching list for August and September

7 August – David Robinson (Communion)

14 August – Rev Allen Holmes

21 August – David Muschamp

28 August – Rev Fred Rich

4 September - David Muschamp (Communion)

11 September – Neil Harris

18 September – Trevor Hippey

25 September – Rev Fred Rich (Harvest)

Coffee Rota

As we have returned to having coffee after services, it would be really helpful if those on the rota could come a little earlier to set things up. You will not need to bring milk.

The coffee rota is on the notice board in the vestibule and will be on the table in the hall on Sundays.

Bible Reading Rota

If you would like to offer to read the Bible for Sunday services, the Bible reading rota is on the notice board in the vestibule and will be on the table in the hall on Sundays.

Bradford Metropolitan Foodbank

The Foodbank collection box is in the hall and any donations will be gratefully received. The first bag of donated items was recently taken to the collection point at Bethel.

Note from the Editor

The next newsletter is due on 25th September – please let me have any items for inclusion by 18th September.

Thank you – Carole

A final thought

What do you call an elephant that doesn't matter? An irrelephant!

Sundays - Services at 10.30 am.

## Website: allertoncongregationalchurch.org.uk

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