



Issue 24 – 5th September 2020

Welcome to this edition of Inspire

Inspire is an opportunity for us all to share with, and encourage each other with testimony, scripture, inspirational thoughts, teaching or a picture - anything to bless and encourage. Please send all contributions to me, Jenny, via:

- email at inspire@belperbaptist.org
- or via WhatsApp on 07500780426

and they will be sent out each weekend via email, WhatsApp and by letter to those without Internet access. There is also a dedicated page on our website. www.belperbaptist.org

Content

As this will be on our website and circulated via WhatsApp we need to be careful about content. For example personal detail or political content will not be published. Any views expressed are those of the contributor and are not necessarily the opinion of the church or its leadership.

Church is not the building - we are!



CartoonChurch.com

How do we feel about U-turns?

There is something that comes over many of us when we are driving our cars and the Sat Nav instructs us to “make a U-turn as soon as possible”. When we have not followed an earlier instruction, the Sat Nav calculates that the quickest or shortest route is to turn back the way we have come. But we know best! We keep going in the confident expectation that within a few minutes Sat Nav will recalculate our route and get us back on track. We resist making U-turns – they are an admission of being wrong and potentially embarrassing.

There is a lot of media attention being given to the many U-turns made by government agencies in recent months. Some see them as an indication of incompetence, whilst others see them as mature responses to changing circumstances and listening to the views of people whose lives are affected by decisions. Whichever of those views we subscribe to, I suspect that we can agree that the number of U-turns we have seen recently has involved a lot of extra work, confusion, and for some, reduced confidence in those who are supposed to be leading us.

It is therefore comforting to know that God does not do U turns! We rejoice that we can now live in a new covenant relationship with God through faith in Jesus Christ, a massive change living under grace instead of Old Testament Law. The scriptures reveal the continuity of the love that God has for his people as his plan for the salvation of the world unfolds. The writers of the Gospels express events in the life of Jesus as the fulfilment of things the Old Testament Prophets spoke about. (e.g. the prophecy of virgin birth Matt 1:22-23.23 & Isaiah 7:14, The entry into Jerusalem on a donkey Matt 21:4-5 & Zechariah 9:9)

Jesus said *“Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfil them. (Matthew 5:17)*

In Luke 18 we read that Jesus took the Twelve aside and told them, *“We are going up to Jerusalem, and everything that is written by the prophets about the Son of Man will be fulfilled. ³² He will be delivered over to the Gentiles. They will mock him, insult him and spit on him; ³³ they will flog him and kill him. On the third day he will rise again.” ³⁴ The disciples did not understand any of this. Its meaning was hidden from them, and they did not know what he was talking about.*
(Luke 18:31-33. Cf. Isaiah 53)

In his teaching, Jesus reinforces the continuing importance of the two great Old Testament commandments “to love God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind, and to love our neighbour as ourselves”. He asserts that *“All the Law and Prophets hang on these two commandments”.* (Matthew 22:37-40). Those same commandments are at the heart of our response to God’s grace and love for us.

As Christians, we know that we can retain our hope in Jesus because *“Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever. (Hebrews 13:8).*

Combine this truth with *“All people are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field; the grass withers and the flowers fall,²⁵ but the word of the Lord endures forever.” (1 Peter*

1:24-25), and we can be totally confident that there will be no U-turns when it comes to the promises of God.

We need to be alert however, to God asking us to do a few U-turns in our walk with him!

Jesus began his ministry with these words *“The time has come,” he said. “The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!”* (Mark 1:15).

In Acts 2, we read Peter’s speech inspired by the Holy Spirit received at Pentecost. *Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Messiah.”* ³⁷ When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, *“Brothers, what shall we do?”*

³⁸ Peter replied, *“Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. ³⁹ The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call.”* (Acts 2:36-39)

Perhaps the call to repentance has gone a bit out of fashion as we proclaim the love and forgiveness of Jesus. It remains at the heart of the gospel. Turning away from attitudes and behaviour that damages our relationship with God and people may sometimes require a minor course correction. In some cases, it may require a full U-turn. As we draw closer to God, as his word becomes embedded in our thinking, he will challenge us and there may well be a clear call from God to individual and collective repentance in some areas. We can choose to carry on regardless, perhaps taking the view that we will continue to benefit from God’s grace in forgiveness. Paul rejects that approach: *“What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? ² By no means! We are those who have died to sin; how can we live in it any longer?”* (Romans 6:1-2).

Repentance - making a U-turn - does require a degree of humility in both confession and in changing how we think, speak and act. It can be a hard road to walk. But we take that road in the confident assurance of the power and presence of God’s Spirit to help us.

*Be still, for the power of the Lord is moving in this place;
He comes to cleanse and heal, to minister His grace.
No work too hard for Him, in faith receive from Him;
Be still, for the power of the Lord is moving in this place. (SOF 40)*

David Harvey



The Good Book

Have you ever read a really good book or watched a TV series and found that you are so immersed in it that it's constantly in your thoughts even when you are not reading or watching it? I am renowned, or is it infamous, in our family for being so absorbed by books that I block everything else out. My children used to joke that they could jump up and down saying "Mum, the house is on fire!" and I wouldn't react at all. Now this is partly because I am a mother of four and achieving some headspace was essential. So, on occasion, when it was safe to do so, I would tune out, escape to a book and emerge only if certain maternal sensors were triggered. Screaming for example, fire alarms or blood spattering, that kind of thing. Rows which escalated beyond a certain point needed my attention, mild bickering could be ignored. Silence was to be investigated immediately as it meant they were up to no good. It seemed to work. No one died and I retained some shreds of sanity.

I do acknowledge however that it can be completely disconcerting to anyone who isn't used to someone who is lost in a good book. Raymond sometimes has to repeat himself a couple of times before he can be sure that I'm actually listening as I do a very good impression of paying attention while actually wondering what the character in my book is going to do next. He has been known to test me by ending a sentence with "And then we're going to do interpretative dance." Just to check if I was listening. Of course it is very rude to tune people out and I do make an effort not to do it when people need me but it's not for nothing that I have a mug with the text "Go away, I'm reading!"

When we read the Bible it can be a superficial glancing over the words or it can be an intense experience of immersion into the stories, the characters of the people of God and into the heart and mind of God Himself. The Bible often encourages us to think about and mull over the scriptures:

Joshua 1: 8 -- This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night.....

Psalms 1: 2 -- But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night.

Reading the Bible and really thinking it through helps to change our thinking and our actions and us for the better, it brings us closer to God, confronts us with the areas where we need to change in our lives and soothes the hurting parts. Paul writes in his letter to Timothy

All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, 2 Tim 3:16

The Bible is often referred to as the good book. Yet many Christians, when asked in polls, say that they don't read it much or often. Yet we are so lucky to live in a country where reading it won't put us in jail, where translations are available in our language and in simplified forms where needed and where there is so much help available to help us think it through. You can even have David Suchet read it to you, online or on CD. Go on, lose yourself and find your soul in the best book ever: just keep an ear open for fire alarms.

Jenny Lesley

THIS
IS THE DAY
THE
LORD
HAS MADE



PSALM 118:24



THY WORD
IS A LAMP
UNTO MY FEET
AND A
LIGHT
UNTO MY PATH

PSALM 119:105

My Bible – A Testimony from The Bible Society

'The day I came down with the coronavirus was a bit shocking really. I had done a set of nights at the hospital and started to feel a bit rotten. I thought it might be the cycle ride I had done. Maybe I'd overdone it.

'I woke up the next morning and I couldn't pick up a glass of water and I couldn't move. I was drenched in sweat. I couldn't bend the top half of my body. I felt like I'd been beaten up. It was so very strange.

'I crawled out of bed and drank three pints of water and rang a friend and asked to borrow a temperature probe. My temperature was 38.3 and I realised that I had it.

'I'm in the Royal Navy and live on a base. I have a room without an en-suite bathroom, so I couldn't self-isolate. I got back from having my test and went into isolation in a separate building. There were 134 rooms and me with one other guy. That's where I spent six days. It was really horrendous. I'm a guy who likes going for runs and cycling and it was so claustrophobic.

'The most difficult thing was that my food was delivered in a polystyrene box by someone fully gowned and masked. I couldn't taste the food. I felt myself getting better after three days, but I knew in my head that, on day seven, there was a chance of acute respiratory disorder. That's well-documented. My mother was very anxious. I've been out of isolation for four days now, and she still thinks I'll drop dead.

'It's been a rich experience for me as a Christian. I was so isolated, but I felt the presence of God, of my church, I was so well prayed for. I had my laptop and a Gideons Bible. That's all the kit I had. So, it was Netflix or the Bible.

'I've been reading Philippians and it was amazing to think that Paul was under house arrest and was writing to enrich the life of believers. I was reading that book and really treasuring the living hope that we have. It was a real comfort. I don't know what a non-Christian would have done in that week. They'd have gone mad. I probably went a bit mad anyway, but it was an incredible significance to sense the presence of God. There was no alternative. Normally, I make myself so busy. But, essentially, I was in prison, like Paul. It gave me a different perspective on God and his presence in my life. I feel really lucky.

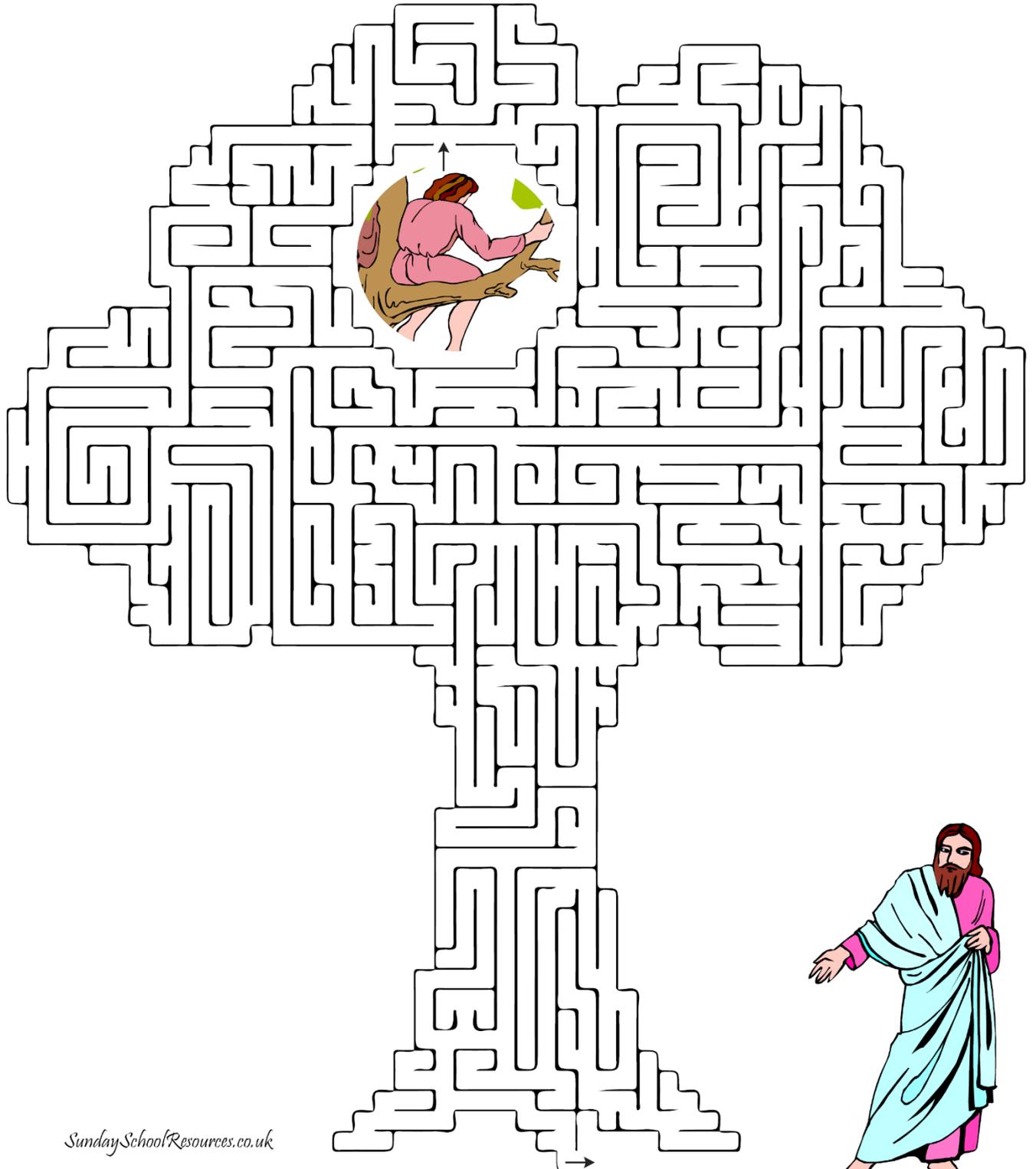
'For the last couple of days, since I've been out of isolation, I've been reading Galatians 5, which talks about us being freed for freedom. It's been so wonderful. I got on my bike and went out in the sunshine. But I know that it's to enjoy Jesus that I've been set free.

'It's been an interesting experience. It's given me a real perspective and refreshed me. We go through these things and we are better when we come out the other end.'

See www.biblesociety.org.uk for more stories about the power of the Bible.

Zacchaeus Meets Jesus

Help Zacchaeus climb down from the tree so he can meet Jesus!



Notices

Sunday Services:

Firstly, a reminder of the Sunday morning online service details:

You can join by visiting <https://zoom.us/j/3431622013>

... or using the Zoom app and meeting ID 3431622013

... or phone (0330) 0885830 and enter the meeting ID 3431622013 then #

The meeting password is 1893

Prayer Meetings:

There will be daily prayer meetings at 7.30am every morning and weekly on Tuesdays at 7pm – using the new Zoom details:

Meeting ID: 899 0084 1018

Password: 1893

Wednesday Drop-In:

There will a drop in via Zoom this Wednesday at 11.30am. All welcome.

Food and Community Hub:

Hope for Belper give their thanks for the continued support of the Hub. People's generosity has kept it well stocked. At the moment there is a shortage of:

- Tins: fruit, Carnation style milk, Carrots, Mixed Veg
- Sponge Pudding
- Cereals
- Shampoo and Conditioner
- Deodorant
- Biscuits, snacks, chocolate
- Toilet Rolls

If you are able to donate any of these items, it would be much appreciated. All of the Co-op stores in Belper have donation points.

Appeal from Phil for Age UK

If you have any empty soap dispensers that you are about to throw away or recycle, please could you save them for my work with Age UK Derby & Derbyshire. We decant large bottles of hand sanitiser for the shops and are running out of empty bottles!! If you have any empty bottles, please let me know and I can arrange to pick them up. Thank you very much.

Phil Brown.

Diary : 6 - 12th September 2020

All this week's activities are being held online. These use the normal church Zoom meeting ID unless indicated otherwise. The Zoom meeting is usually open 5-10 minutes before the stated start time.

Sunday

- 09:00 Prayers (online) – [Meeting ID 899 0084 1018]
- 10:30 Morning Worship (online) – [Meeting ID 343 162 2013]

Monday

- 07:30 Prayers (online) – [Meeting ID 899 0084 1018]

Tuesday

- 07:30 Prayers (online) – [Meeting ID 899 0084 1018]

Wednesday

- 07:30 Prayers (online) – [Meeting ID 899 0084 1018]
- 11.30 Drop In (online) – [Meeting ID 343 162 2013]
- 19:15 House Group (online) – [Meeting ID 343 162 2013]

Thursday

- 07:30 Prayers (online) – [Meeting ID 899 0084 1018]
- 20:00 House Group (online) – [Meeting ID 343 162 2013]

Friday

- 07:30 Prayers (online) – [Meeting ID 899 0084 1018]

Saturday

- 09:00 Prayers (online) – [Meeting ID 899 0084 1018]