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**WELCOME TO 2013 - THE FORMIDABLE "RIVER JORDAN"!**

**I WILL NOT CROSS THIS JORDAN ALONE**

## Vicar's ten - minute reflection **WILL YOU CROSS THIS JORDAN (2013) ALONE?**



When I was a little boy, I lived with my parents in a city (Lagos) very close to a park (Campos Square) which used to be a burial ground. At the time I was in primary school, the burial ground had been turned to a park where school children and adults at various times played football. At night, it was sparsely lit. A few times when I had to cross the Park to our house in the evening, I was often afraid that ghosts would appear to me and harm me. So, I always waited until I saw an elderly person, and I would walk behind him as a sort of cover. I could not walk that stretch of land alone at night, because I did not know what lay ahead.

**If you are reading this reflection, you must have crossed over from 2012 to 2013. Congratulations.** But what lies ahead in 2013 is still a mystery and to many it is intimidating because of either the failures of the past or the lack of faith to tap into available resources to make the year fruitful. This was the experience of the children of Israel as they converged at the wilderness side of River Jordan. You will need to read Joshua 3:1-18 to have the real flavour of this article

The Israelites did not know what lay ahead. Their only reconnaissance had come from the exaggerated reports of a few spies. Not only did they face the Jordan River at flood stage; but on the other side they would confront the walled cities of fierce Canaanite fighters. Does this reflect your apprehensions for 2013? You are not alone. I have some unfinished business in my life also just as the Israelites in our passage so **what can we learn from God's dealings with them which will equip us to navigate through the coming year "River Jordan" successfully.**

First and foremost we must realise that God's ways are not always our ways. We can't get to the other side in our own strength. **Sometimes God places us in circumstances where we have to throw our hands up and say: I can't cope with this.** I can't cope with a state of joblessness. I can't cope with the situation in my family or my marriage...And God's answer is often: I know you can't – not on your own. But my power is made perfect in weakness.

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And the more proud and self-reliant we are, the more painful that lesson is going to be when God summons us for a real-life tutorial. And so when you're on the edge of a flooded jungle swamp and God says, "OK, it is time to cross over, it is time to trust and obey," do you look at the realities before your eyes and say: "Utter madness; you must be joking."

For the ancient Hebrews and for us, faith then becomes critical. Faith is the "assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen." (Heb. 11:1) **Faith is being willing to venture with God, blindfolded.** At Joshua's commissioning, God repeatedly exhorted Joshua, "Be strong and courageous." God called Joshua to lead Israel into the land that he had promised Israel's ancestors. God promised that he would go with Joshua. God promised Joshua success. But promises still required action. If Joshua was to experience the fulfilment of God's promises, he had to muster up the courage to lead the people into the Promised Land.

Why courage? C. S. Lewis captured the crucial role that courage plays when he wrote, **"Courage is not simply one of the virtues, but the form of every virtue at its testing point." Courage is the initial step in the journey that connects the dots between God's promises and their fulfilment.**

God gave some clear instructions for crossing the Jordan River as the Israelites faced up to their own utter helplessness to accomplish what it set before them (Joshua 3:1-2). At that time, the people of Israel saw a rushing river, swollen with spring rains lying in front of them. They must have asked, "How can we ever cross this river which was also in flood season?"

God instructed that the ark of God would lead the way (verses 3-5). Joshua didn't send his Army Corps of Engineers first. Instead, he sent the priests who carried the ark of the covenant, which was the visible representation of God's presence with the people. Joshua knew this was a spiritual problem, not a feat of human engineering.

Consecrate yourself – set yourself apart from common things in order to focus on the LORD, and to see that the LORD will do wonders among you. Because this would be a spiritual battle, Joshua required that the people have a spiritual preparation.

## PARENTING FOR MEN



Families are so busy and stressed today that each person ends up going their own way. Parents are busy running their children from one activity to another. Making sure a child has activities they enjoy is necessary, but this should not be at the expense of quality time together as a family. It is a fact that when families spend time together the children will grow into better parents themselves.

The father, or whoever is the father figure at home, is meant to be the head of the family and he may need to set boundaries for the family. This does not mean that the man has the right to boss everyone around. Being the head of a family is about being a leader not a dictator. Children instinctively look to their father for direction and instruction, which sometimes means discipline. If a father is a good and just person who treats everyone with respect, then his children will learn more when he says you must show respect to anyone you meet. Remember, fathers' words without the deeds to back them up are empty words.

### 10 Ways To Be A Better Dad

**Respect Your Children's Mother:** One of the best things a father can do for his children is to respect their mother. It is essential that you work towards keeping your marriage strong and healthy. If you're not married, it is still important to respect and support the mother of your children. A father and mother who respect each other, and let their children know it, provide a secure environment for them. When children see their parents respecting each other, they are more likely to feel that they are also accepted and respected.

**Spend Time With Your Children:** How a father spends his time tells his children what's important to him. If you always seem too busy for your children, they will feel neglected no matter what you say. Treasuring children often means sacrificing other things, but it is essential to spend time with your children. Kids grow up so quickly. Missed opportunities are forever lost.

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## Parenting for men

**Earn The Right To Be Heard:** All too often the only time a father speaks to his children is when they have done something wrong. That's why so many children cringe when their mother says, "Your father wants to talk with you." Begin talking with your kids when they are very young so that difficult subjects will be easier to handle as they get older. Take time and listen to their ideas and problems.

**Discipline with love:** All children need guidance and discipline, not as punishment, but to set reasonable limits. Remind your children of the consequences of their actions and provide meaningful rewards for desirable behaviour. Fathers who discipline in a calm and fair manner show love for their children.

**Be A Role Model:** Fathers are role models to their kids whether they realize it or not. A girl who spends time with a loving father grows up knowing she deserves to be treated with respect by boys, and what to look for in a husband. Fathers can teach sons what is important in life by demonstrating love to their spouses, honesty, humility and responsibility. "All the world's a stage..." and a father plays one of the most vital roles.

**Be A Teacher:** Too many fathers think teaching is something others do. But a father who teaches his children about right and wrong, and encourages them to do their best, will see his children make good choices. Involved fathers use everyday examples to help their children learn the basic lessons of life.

**Eat Together As A Family:** Sharing a meal together (breakfast, lunch or dinner) can be an important part of healthy family life. In addition to providing some structure in a busy day, it gives kids the chance to talk about what they are doing and want to do. It is also a good time for fathers to listen and give advice. Most importantly, it is a time for families to be together each day.

**Read To Your Children:** In a world where television often dominates the lives of children, it is important that fathers make the effort to read to their children. Children learn best by doing and reading, as well as seeing and hearing. Begin reading to your children when they are very young. (continued on page 10)

## Will you cross this “Jordan” alone?

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So the first way the Lord prepares his people is to get them to focus on His presence among them. "When you see the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God, and the priests...you are to move out from your positions and follow it. The ark was the visible symbol of The Lord's presence-the place where the infinite Creator of the universe physically manifested himself and dwelt among His people. In times of great stress and anxiety about the future, God's people need constant reminders of the Lord's presence among them.

But what's the function of the Lord's presence in v2-4 when you are expected to keep at a good distance from it? When you're driving along a motorway you get lots of signs don't you? Signs telling you what's coming up at the next junction, or those new digital signs that tell there's heavy traffic on the M18 or whatever. But if you get too close to the sign before you spot it, you can't read it properly or you might miss your junction completely. And that's the function of the ark here in v4. When the Lord was leading his people out of Egypt, through the Red sea and on towards the Promised Land, He manifested himself in a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. And that's how the Lord led and directed His people. It's like a sort of giant moving motorway signpost. And that's what the Lord is doing here in v4. It's both a reassuring symbol of the Lord's presence. But it's also a challenging signpost telling them that he really did want them to cross the Jordan and move on to take possession of the Promised Land. So the Lord prepares His people for the task ahead firstly in v2-4 by focusing their attention on His presence; a presence that gives reassurance and direction.

But our faithful God found time to encourage Joshua (verses 7-8). And the Lord says to Joshua: "I know how you're feeling that you can never live up to Moses' legacy... I know all about the mutterings in the congregation; I know what some people are saying about you, questioning whether you're up to the job and all that. So be encouraged: I have called you; Moses was simply my servant and now you're my servant. And I will publicly establish and confirm your leadership among the people so don't fear the

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## Will you cross this “Jordan” alone?

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people; be strong and courageous; fear me; trust and obey me and leave me to worry about getting the people to follow you.”

The priests carrying the ark are told to go up to the river carrying the ark and wade into it. And as soon as they do, as soon as their feet touch the water, the river will be cut off upstream. It seems like madness. The ark was heavy. They could be washed away by the current. Would they trust God and do what seems like a crazy thing? But even if they got to the other side, they'd have an ever bigger challenge: to take on the fortified city of Jericho and then drive out all the well-armed inhabitants of the Promised Land: the Canaanites, Hittites, Hivites, Perizzites, Girgashites, Amorites and Jebusites.

**God is basically saying: I'll get you through the Jordan just as I've promised, but against all human odds. And that will give you the confidence to trust the rest of my promises for the future:**

And so what God is basically saying in v9-13 is this: I'll get you through the Jordan just as I've promised, but against all human odds. And that will give you the confidence to trust the rest of my promises for the future: the promise that I really will drive out the inhabitants of the Promised Land so you can move in and take it over.

The impossible problems in their way are not seen as an oppressive trial, but as a glorious opportunity to see God work.

But, just like the Israelites, we need to act on the basis of those promises. We need to step out in obedience and take hold of what's been promised. Because if we disobey the Lord's commands, then as we see in the rest of Joshua and the OT, we'll personally forfeit the promised blessings. The Lord always keeps His promises to His people. But His people are defined by those who have faith in him and his promises. So let me ask you: are you one of His people: are you trusting in the Lord's promise of forgiveness and salvation and in the death of the Lord Jesus Christ alone?

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## Will you cross this “Jordan” alone?

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And even if you are, what else is the Lord challenging you about in your Christian life? What issue of obedience is He putting His finger on this morning? Are there areas in your life you're not fully trusting Him? Because there's no excuse. He's provided every encouragement we need. The Lord encourages His people then; both the leaders and everyone else.

Who knows for how long the priests stood there in the river? It might have been a moment; but it may have been a long time - but in a situation like that, a moment seems like a long time! We usually want the river to be dry before we even make a step; but God was truly calling Israel to step out in faith. And as he did so the formidable Jordan became a passage to God's unfolding favour and abundance.

The Jordan is stopped (16-17) and the people cross over on dry ground. This miracle obviously connects with the miracle the nation knew some 40 years earlier: the passing through the Red Sea. God brought them out of Egypt's bondage with a miracle, and He brought them in to the Promised Land with a miracle.

How did it happen? What was the key to this amazing miracle? Notice the centrality of the ark of the covenant of the LORD. The ark is referred to 14 times in these 17 verses. This was all about the trust Joshua, the priests, and Israel had in the God they knew was present with them.

Jesus is the fulfilment of the ark; He is Immanuel, which is translated, "God with us" (Matthew 1:23). Jesus has cleared the way to victory over all things: Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in the cross (Colossians 2:15). As we keep our eyes on Him, and follow behind our victorious Jesus, the river of impossibility will dry up. Continued on page 9

**Jesus is...the Ark; He is Immanuel, which is translated, "God with us". Jesus has cleared the way to victory over all things: Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in the cross (Colossians 2:15).**

## Will you cross this “Jordan” alone?

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God kept His promise. Because God always keeps His promises. But the challenge for God’s people then and now is to trust and obey Him in the light of those promises. Even when those promises and commands seem out of this world. And when we’re tempted to doubt that, let’s remember Joshua and the Jordan. Let’s remember that no obstacle is too big for the Lord to overcome.

A story is told of a ship that was being tossed by a storm and people were rushing to grab their life-jackets. While the ship’s crew started helping people, they found a boy sitting in a corner in the deck enjoying an ice-cream. A crew-member asked the boy, “Are you not afraid we are in trouble?” Quick came the reply, “Why should I be afraid when my dad is the captain of the ship? He will surely steer us to safety”. Make God the captain of your life. He will steer you through the darkest nights.

**A crew-member asked the boy, “Are you not afraid we are in trouble?” Quick came the reply, “Why should I be afraid when my dad is the captain of the ship? He will surely steer us to safety”. Make God the captain of your life. He will steer you through the darkest nights.**

Will you trust God as you should; not just for your salvation, but in the details of life in this world too? Will you put your faith in the Lord who can give you direction and assure you of His presence?

Dear Heavenly Father, thank you that you are totally sovereign not just over the universe you created but also over all the details of our everyday lives. Help us to trust your promises for the future and especially for 2013, knowing that you’ve made every necessary preparation and provided us with every encouragement we need. Help us to focus on your presence through your Holy Spirit and to reflect on your teaching, so that we might trust you more fully and praise you more joyfully. In Jesus’ name we pray, Amen.

Dele Agbelusi

## Parenting for men

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When they are older encourage them to read on their own. Instilling in your children a love for reading is one of the best ways to ensure they will have a lifetime of personal and career growth.

**Show Affection:** Children need the security that comes from knowing they are wanted, accepted and loved by their family. Parents, especially fathers, need to feel both comfortable and willing to hug their children. Showing affection every day is the best way to let your children know that you love them.

**Realize That A Father's Job Is Never Done:** Even after children are grown and ready to leave home, they will still look to their fathers for wisdom and advice. Whether it is continued schooling, a new job or a wedding, fathers continue to play an essential part in the lives of their children as they grow and, perhaps, marry and build their own families.

## STILL IN THE SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS

There is a lady whose life will touch all those who are close to her. It is my prayer that as I grow older, I will have her spirit. She had a lot of trouble, all kinds of difficulties, heart-aches and tragedies in her life. But I have always admired her so much because I have been to her home in times of great joy and I have been there in times of great sorrow. And, she is always the same... poised, serene, confident... that beautiful smile, that radiant powerful expression on her face, that positive hopeful attitude. One day I said to her: How do you do it? And she answered: "Well, I have always had the feeling that no matter how difficult the experience is, God is with me." God is with us... that is the message of Christmas... that is the promise of Christmas... that is the great gift of Christmas. God is with us... but... we need to open the door and let Him in.

Dele Agbelusi

## STILL IN THE SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS

Dearly Beloved,

King Solomon, during the dedication of the temple of the Lord, declared: **"But will God really dwell on earth with men? The heavens, even the highest heavens, cannot contain you. How much less this temple I have built!"** (2Chron. 6:18). Two of several issues that Solomon grappled with were: a) God is bigger than His creation, so how can He minimize Himself to fit into the earth let alone a small building called "Temple?" b) God is Holy and the heavens cannot contain His holiness, how then can He come to dwell on earth - a place of ungodliness? What Solomon thought was impossible, God, on Christmas Day repackaged Himself into human form, entered our world and fitted in perfectly. But even more amazing is the fact that God repackaged Himself again and now lives in our miniscule hearts when we open the door for Him. Where ever God resides, that is "holy ground" for He cannot dwell where sin reigns. Is Christ at home in your heart or do you keep on grieving Him with your sins? **"I am the LORD your God; consecrate yourselves and be holy, because I am holy..."**

(Lev 11:44)

Sunday & Grace Bwanhot

## SAYINGS OF THE WISE - OPPORTUNITY

"Every morning is a fresh beginning. Every day is the world made new. Today is a new day. Today is my world made new. I have lived all my life up to this moment, to come to this day. This moment - this day - is as good as any moment in all eternity. I shall make of this day - each moment of this day - a heaven on earth. This is my day of opportunity."

Dan Custer

"You cannot afford to wait for perfect conditions. Goal-setting is often a matter of balancing timing against available resources. Opportunities are easily lost while waiting for perfect conditions."

Gary Ryan Blair

## THE KING JAMES-AUTHORISED VERSION



Have you ever attended a frustrating meeting where nothing much seems to get done? The Hampton Court conference, held in 1604, was like that. When James VI of Scotland rode south to London on the way to the coronation that would make him James I of England, Puritans presented him with a petition, pleading for freedom from man-made rites and ceremonies in worship. Since over 1,000 leaders of these reform-minded Christians signed the petition, James could not ignore it.

He called for a conference of churchmen and theologians to be held at Hampton Court, one of the royal palaces. But his attitude toward the event was signalled by the wording of the summons, "for the hearing, and for the determining, things *pretended* to be amiss in the Church." [our italics]

The Puritans thought that the Church of England had kept too many Catholic practices. They wanted church government put in the hands of the people, rather than a hierarchy of bishops and archbishops. But the Puritans weren't going to get their wish. The king made that plain at Hampton Court. He recognized the democratic tendencies of Puritanism and suspected that if the people dumped bishops they one day might dump their king. James and his son, Charles I, harassed the Puritans so fiercely that many fled to America.

James and the Puritans did agree on one thing at Hampton. When Dr. John Reynolds, President of Corpus Christi College, Oxford, proposed a new translation of the English Bible, he found James enthusiastic. The king detested the Geneva Bible, the most popular translation in use in England. He considered its margin notes "very partial, untrue, seditious, and savouring too much of dangerous and seditious conceits." In other words, the Geneva Bible did not support the theory that kings have divine right to rule, even if they behave badly. James wanted a Bible free of political and theological notes.

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## **The king James-authorized version**

And so, on , January 17, 1604, the motion was carried "...that a translation be made of the whole Bible, as consonant as can be to the original Hebrew and Greek; and this to be set out and printed, without any marginal notes..."

Forty-seven of England's top Bible scholars were appointed to do the work. In an effort to diminish bias, both Anglicans and Puritans were included. King James himself organized the task. The translators were counted off into six panels (three Old Testament, two New Testament, one Apocrypha). The king charged them to stick as close to the earlier Bishop's Bible as accuracy would allow, but to take into account earlier versions. In the end, the new translation borrowed about seventy percent of its wording from William Tyndale's vivid translation.

The procedure was to assign each translator a portion of Scripture. He had to present his work to the others in his group for approval. Each book was then sent to the five other groups for review and criticism. With this procedure, each book was scrutinized by every member of the team. A committee of twelve--two from each team--made a final review.

By 1611, the translation was complete, but it would take years for this Bible to win general acceptance. Readers who had memorized scripture from earlier versions hesitated to adopt new wordings. One scholar opposed it on the grounds he was preparing a better version! Others complained that it was not consistent and that there were spelling errors.

Because James was so closely involved with the work, the 1611 translation is often called the "Authorized Version" (in America, the "King James Version"). In time it became the most beloved English translation. Through its powerful rhythms and pleasing phrases, it shaped the language of the Bible-reading public. A few denominations consider the King James Version virtually inspired, the only acceptable translation for reading and study.

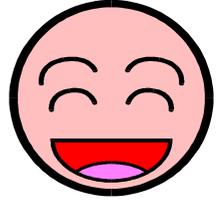
History Timeline - Christianity Today

# LAUGHTER LINES

## HOUSEHOLD HOBBIES?

My eight-year-old son has hundreds of baseball cards stacked around his room. I complained to him about it as I tried to help him straighten his mess. "But Mom," he argued, "it's my hobby—just like you have cooking and cleaning!"

—Cheryl A. Paden, Nebraska. *Today's Christian Woman*, "Small Talk."



## HONESTY OF CHILDREN

My sister, Ann, a third-grade teacher, invited her class to her wedding. The wedding was at 3:30 p.m. on a weekday, so the substitute teacher brought Ann's class to the church.

The music started, the attendants took their places, and the bride came down the aisle on the arm of her father. At this point one alarmed student exclaimed, "She's not going to marry that old man, is she?"

—Cheryl A. Paden, Nebraska. *Today's Christian Woman*, "Small Talk."

## QUICK ANSWER

The cop got out of his car and the kid who was stopped for speeding rolled down his window.

"I've been waiting for you all day," the cop said. The kid replied, "Yeah, well I got here as fast as I could."

When the cop finally stopped laughing, he sent the kid on his way without a ticket.

## OLD AGE

On Winston Churchill's 75th birthday, a photographer said, "I hope, sir that I will shoot your picture on your hundredth birthday." Churchill answered, "I don't see why not, young man. You look reasonably fit and healthy."

*A Bundle of laughs - J. John & Mark Stibbe*

# LAUGHTER LINES

## HUMILITY

The story is told of the famous boxer Muhammad Ali, who was flying one time to an engagement. The aircraft ran into severe turbulence and was soon being shaken violently. The passengers were all instructed to fasten their seatbelts straightaway. Everyone complied except Ali.

Noticing this, a stewardess approached him and asked him to fasten his belt. Ali replied, "Superman don't need no seat belt." The stewardess took one look at him and retorted, "Superman don't need no airplane either!"

*A Bundle of laughs - J. John & Mark Stibbe*

## HUMOROUS MARRIAGE EPITAPHS

On an old British tombstone there is inscribed:

The children of Israel wanted bread  
And the Lord he sent them manna.  
Old clerk Wallace wanted a wife  
And the devil sent him Anna.

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"Here lies Obidiah Wilkinson and his wife Ruth." Underneath were the words: "Their warfare is ended."

Rev. James A Simpson

## YOU WILL ALL BE BAPTISTS.

A group of ministers attending a Conference had a free afternoon. Despite the wet weather they decided to go for a walk. They came to a rickety derelict footbridge crossing a shallow river which was in full tide. Suddenly they heard a shout and saw an old man running down the hill towards them. The senior minister shouted back, "it is all right, my man. We are not trespassing. We are Presbyterian ministers from the conference." Back came the reply, "I am not caring whether you are Presbyterians or not. I'm simply telling you that if you try to cross that bridge, you'll all be Baptists."

Rev. James A Simpson

## **CREDIT/DEBIT CARD SCAM - BEWARE!**

The Police want to make people aware of this "new and clever credit card scam - be wary of those who come bearing gifts".

A few days ago someone locally received a phone call from someone who said that he was from "Express Couriers" asking if they were going to be home because there was a package for them, and the caller said that the delivery would arrive at their home in roughly an hour.

A delivery man turned up with a beautiful basket of flowers and wine. Intrigued about who would send them such a gift, they inquired as to who the sender was. The delivery man's reply was, he was only delivering the gift package, But allegedly a card was being sent separately; There was also a consignment note with the gift. He then went on to explain that because the gift contained alcohol, there was a £3.00 "delivery charge" as proof that he had actually delivered the package to an adult, And not just left it on the doorstep to be stolen or taken by anyone.

This sounded logical and they offered to pay him cash. He then said that the company required the payment to be by credit or debit card only so that everything is properly accounted for.

The husband, who, by this time, was standing beside his wife, pulled out of his wallet his credit/debit card, and 'John', the "delivery man", asked the husband to swipe the card on the small mobile card machine which had a small screen and keypad where he was also asked to enter The card's PIN and security number. A receipt was printed out and given to them.

To their surprise, between Thursday and the following Monday, £4,000 had been charged/withdrawn from their credit/debit account at various ATM machines. It appears that somehow the "mobile credit card machine" which the delivery man carried was able to duplicate and create a cloned card with all their card details, including PIN number. Upon finding out the illegal transactions on their card, of course, they immediately notified the bank which issued them the card, and the credit/debit account has been closed. The Police confirmed that several households in the area had been affected by the scam.

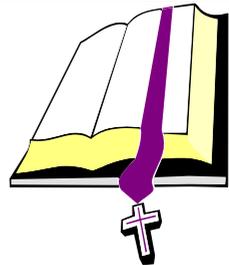
CASCH neighbourhood watch

## QUOTABLE QUOTES

- **The Bible is the only book where the author is always present whenever it is read.**  
*A Bundle of laughs - J.John & Mark Stibbe*
- **A person whose Bible is falling apart usually isn't**  
*A Bundle of laughs - J.John & Mark Stibbe*
- **Coincidence is when God chooses to remain anonymous.**  
*A Bundle of laughs - J.John & Mark Stibbe*
- **God's favourite department: Lost and Found**
- **He who kneels before God can stand before anyone**
- **"O God of second chances and New Beginnings, Here I am again." Nancy Spiegelberg**

### Memory Verse

**Even youths grow tired and weary,  
and young men stumble and fall;  
but those who hope in the LORD  
will renew their strength.  
They will soar on wings like eagles;  
they will run and not grow weary,  
they will walk and not be faint. " (Isaiah 40:30-31)**



## **I DO BELIEVE; HELP ME OVERCOME MY UNBELIEF**

Yesterday, 16th January 2013, we woke up to the news of a helicopter crash in London which took the lives of two people (The pilot of the helicopter and a passer-by) and injured several others. Why many people will ask, should an innocent man going to earn his daily bread die so unceremoniously?

Every day the television and newspapers bring into our homes reports of incidents that cannot fail to shock and horrify: murders, accidents, abuse of those who are vulnerable, fires, floods, robberies, acts of violence, cruelty, and so on. Can there be any doubt about the truth of Oswald Chambers' words, 'Life is more tragic than orderly'?

You may even be caught up in the midst of some personal tragedy at this very moment and feel as if you are being sucked down into a whirlpool of despair. 'Now is the time for one of God's great surprises,' you may be saying to yourself. 'Let Him lift me out of the pit I have fallen into.' But nothing happens. Your marriage and family life go from bad to worse. Your finances fail. Your sickness or disability doesn't get better. You can't find a job. Why doesn't God pull out of His big surprises? If He is loving, as He says He is, then why doesn't He do something? Why?

'Why?' as someone has commented, 'is the easiest question to ask, but not the easiest to answer.' It's not wrong to air the question if something is troubling you, but try not to become obsessed about the matter. The best position to take in times of perplexity is the position of trust. Though not easy, adopting the same approach to the Lord as the man in Mark 9:14-32 will produce amazing results in the soul: 'I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief!' The principle is this: when complete trust is difficult, first identify the fact that you already have some trust, then ask for more. You will receive from God only as much as you are willing to receive. D.A.

(Parts of this article are adapted from *Selwyn Hughes Every Day With Jesus - December 2006*)

# HEAVENLY CORRESPONDENCE

**E-MAIL FROM GOD (33)**

File Edit View Options Tools Help

Send Contacts Spell Attach Security Save

From: **GOD, YOUR HEAVENLY FATHER**

To: **You, My beloved child**

**Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you'll recover your life. I'll show you how to take a real rest. Matthew 11:28 (The Message)**

Subject: **GET REAL**

My Child,

There is nothing more exhausting than "playing church," acting like you've got it all together while inside you're aching, lonely, and needing to be real with someone. That kind of religious 'play acting' is the road to spiritual burnout.

Besides, it's not how things work with Me. Never has been. If there's one place on earth you can be real, it's with Me. If there's one place you can give the act a rest, it's in My presence. I'm not interested in anyone's performance. I want to make contact with the real you. I want to heal what's hurting in you, to forgive what needs forgiving, to refresh you totally. Come away with Me and let Me fill you with new life. Give it a rest.

Your Heavenly Dad,

God.

Adapted from 'e-mail from God for Teens'-Clonigers

## TEXT FOR THE YEAR (Isaiah 41:10. NLT)

**Don't be afraid, for I am with you. Don't be discouraged, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you. I will hold you up with my victorious right hand.**

### FINDING OUT ABOUT ...CHRIST CHURCH?

**Tel/Fax: 020 8340 1566**

We are a family of men and women, boys and girls who are resolved to live for God in a world that has largely chosen to ignore Him.

We believe that it is God's world and that He has given the answer to all human problems in Jesus Christ. As a body of believers, we offer to all who come, regular opportunities for worship and service that point the way to God as our strongest resource in all aspects of life.

We will be pleased to welcome you to any of our activities. You will find a warm welcome at Christ Church.

#### **Times of worship and fellowship are shown below:**

- Sunday**
- **8.00 am.** Holy Communion (Book of Common Prayer)
  - **10.30 am.** Main service with Crèche facilities
- There is family/parade service once every month - usually the third Sunday of the month unless otherwise indicated.
- **5.00 pm.** Evening worship

#### **WEEKLY ACTIVITIES AT A GLANCE**

- Sunday** - Choir practice in church (9.30 am)
- Monday** - Baby n' Toddler Group (9.30 am to 11.30 am) - On recess  
- Brownies meeting in church (5.30 pm)  
- Prayer meetings in church - 21st Jan., 4th February
- Wednesday** - Fellowship Meal in church (6:30 pm) followed by,  
Bible Fellowship (7.15 pm)
- Thursday** - Homework Club (5 pm-7 pm during term-time)
- Friday** - Bible Fellowship in church - West Chapel (2.00 pm) - On recess  
- Scouts meeting in church and hall (6.30 pm)  
- Music Team practice in choir vestry (6.00 pm)
- Saturday** - Intercessors prayer meeting in church (7-8 pm)
- Enquiry/Counselling/Prayer Lifeline** - please phone 020 8340 1566
- Editorial Board:** Sheila Wheeler, Iyabo Agbelusi, Dele Agbelusi
- Vicar:** Revd Canon Dele Agbelusi
- Church Wardens:** Peter Green, Charles Murphy
- Lay Ministers:** Richard Mercer, Iyabo Agbelusi
- Organist:** Jan Hazucha

**YOUR COMMENTS AND CONTRIBUTIONS ARE WELCOME**

**PLEASE WRITE TO THE EDITOR AT:**

**CROSSLINKS, THE VICARAGE, 32 CRESCENT ROAD, LONDON, N8 8AX**