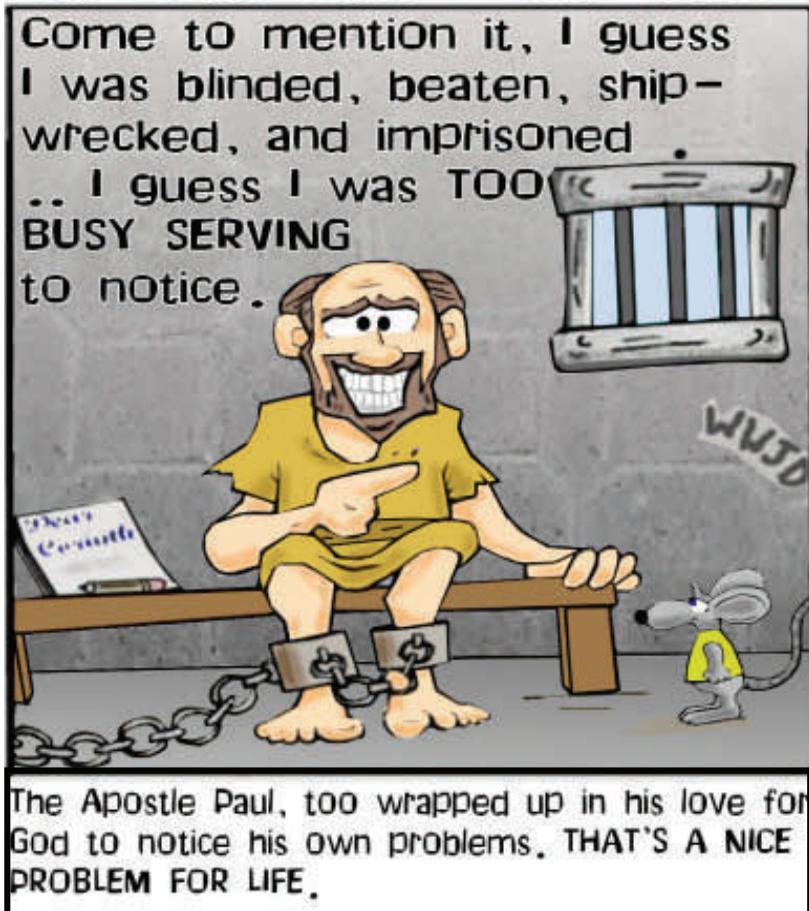




**CHRIST CHURCH
CROUCH END HILL
LONDON N8 8AX
CROSSLINKS
WHY ME LORD?**

A MAGAZINE OF THE CHURCH ON THE HILL



Back Pew - Jeff Larson

MAY 2007 ISSUE 7.85

Vicar's three minute reflection WHY ME LORD?



Why is one child physically disabled while another is athletically talented in the same family? Why do people die before realizing their potential? Why should 33 people die in Virginia Tech as a result of a deranged man who went on a killing spree? "What have I done to deserve this?" A teacher asked his pastor. He went on to explain that he and his wife had tried to do everything they knew in rearing their children. Their oldest son had been in church all of his life. He had been actively engaged in all of the church's youth activities. He had been a good student in school. And now at age seventeen he was hooked on drugs. "Why me Lord?" was this teacher's question. What I have I done to deserve this? In most cases, we have done nothing. These are questions we cannot successfully answer in this life because we do not see all that God sees.

**All of our good works
cannot be used to make
God become indebted
to us.**

In the Old Testament, people believed that goodness was rewarded and evil was punished in this life. If your life is miserable and you have to experience adversities, it is a clear indication that you are evil and that God was repaying you for your deed. This belief is seen in the approach of the "comforters", who came to visit Job in his time of great trouble. Each of them let him know that he must have sinned in some way to deserve all that was happening to him. Yet, Job maintained his innocence to the end. We still have the likes of Job's counsellors today, because in many places, our theology is no different from how Job's friends understood God.

I want us to look at two verses that are tucked in, almost insignificantly in Acts 12—where Peter experienced the miraculous release from prison. The first one is verse 2, where we are told that James, one of the twelve apostles was killed. He was cut down at his prime – a time when he would have been a real asset to the church. What has James done to deserve this? Nothing. perhaps you have expressed that question at the death of a loved one .



You may have asked God, “Why did she have to die?” What did she do to deserve this?” They are all variations of “why me Lord?”

We act as though we deserve goodness, blessing, and a problem—free life. We never question why all the good things that we enjoy come to us. It is only when the reverse occurs, when something bad happens that we question God. All good things that we experience and enjoy come as a result of God’s grace. We cannot buy grace and neither do we deserve it. God has given us grace because he loves us. All of our good works cannot be used to make God become indebted to us.

At those times when we are low and are beginning to feel we are a victim of some kind of celestial conspiracy, we must learn to count our blessings. Write them down. You may discover that you have been a recipient of more good things than you ever cared to be grateful for.

The second verse I want to point to is verse 24. “But the word of God grew and multiplied”. In the context of the beheading of James and the persecution of the Church, God’s word grew. The disciples of Christ did not call a Board meeting to review their strategy that would make their witnessing safer or would prevent further persecution. Problems in their lives and in the life of the Church led them to trust God the more.

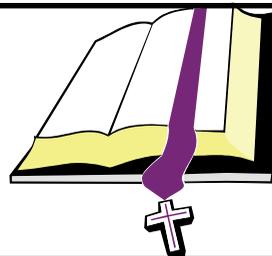
It is when we feel that we are the only ones experiencing difficulty that we want to know what we have done to deserve those troubles. Job never found the answers to why he suffered. But Job found God (Job 42:5), and that was enough. That could be your experience too if you trust God with all your heart in all the seasons of life.

Dele Agbelusi

Memory Verse

Who has a claim against me that I must pay? Everything under heaven belongs to me.

Job 41: 11



DEAR GOD, HELP ME



I am always thrilled and uplifted by the faith of little children. Maybe that is why when anyone sends me a list of CHILDREN'S LETTERS TO GOD, I read them not only with a smile, but also with a sigh: Oh, to have faith like that. Here are a few that are circulating right now:

Dear God, Instead of letting people die and having to make new ones, why don't You just keep the ones You have now? -- Jane

Dear God, Who draws the lines around the countries? -- Nan

Dear God, I went to this wedding and they kissed right in church. Is that okay? -- Neil

Dear God, What does it mean, You are a Jealous God? I thought You had everything. Jane

Dear God, Did you really mean "Do unto others as they do unto you?" Because if you did, then I'm going to fix my brother! -- Darla

Dear God, Thank you for the baby brother, but what I prayed for was a puppy. -- Joyce

Well, that is a good question for God. If you prayed for a puppy, a puppy is what you ought to expect--not a baby brother! We can learn a lot about faith by observing our children. More inspiring than the faith of little children, however, is the faith of many adults.

There are some of you who have setbacks, disappointments, heartaches untold--and yet you've kept your faith, and more than that, many of you have grown in your faith through those shattering experiences.

So, if your heart is heavy this day--if you feel as if the Father's address is unknown--find solace in these words from the Psalmist, chapter 46: "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.

DEAR GOD, HELP ME

Therefore we will not fear, though the earth should change, though the mountains shake in the heart of the sea; though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains tremble with its tumult . . . " Be still, and know that I am God! I am exalted among the nations, I am exalted in the earth.' The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge...

There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy habitation of the Most High. God is in the midst of the city; it shall not be moved; God will help it when the morning dawns. The nations are in an uproar, the kingdoms totter; he utters his voice, the earth melts. The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge . . . "~Be still, and know that I am God! I am exalted among the nations, I am exalted in the earth.' The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge." (NRSV) This is the heart of Reformation faith: First, last, and always--God!

The saddest person on earth is the person who does not know God. Maybe that is your situation. Many people go through the motions of religious faith without really feeling its joy, its comfort, its hope. Maybe in your heart you are reaching out to God right now. And maybe, just maybe, in the reading of Scripture, in the hymns, in the familiar prayers, you will find God once again, in Christ Jesus. There is no one sadder than the person without God. And how can you know Him if you fail to appreciate His great gesture towards you by making Himself known. The unknowable has made himself known in Christ Jesus. The unseen God has revealed himself in Jesus Christ. He did more than reveal Himself, he took the guilt of shame and punishment for transgression which rightfully is yours, upon himself. The Creator was struck by the hands of his creation. And He endured all this, so that you may know God and be his friend. Never to be haunted by sin again. The gift is yours, but you must appropriate it. Receive Jesus into your life now. Let the Son come into your life and dispel the darkness. D.A.

THE SMALLEST PIECE

A fourteenth-century Italian stained-glass artist was summoned to design and create a huge portrait for the window of a cathedral in Chartres, France, a place well known for its stained-glass work. He laid all of the pieces he was going to use out on the floor of the cathedral. They were beautiful to behold; most of them were large and colourful. Some of the colours from that time cannot even be reproduced today. Among these awesome pieces of glass was a small, clear piece about as big as your fingernail. As the stained-glass portrait was assembled, that little piece remained on the floor. Only the big colourful pieces of glass were used.

On the day of the window's completion, the tiny piece of clear glass was still lying on the ground. The entire city gathered to witness the unveiling of the brilliant and beautiful stained-glass portrait. The artist stood in front of the crowd, made his speech, and dramatically pulled down the cloth cover. The crowd gasped at the beauty of the colourful window glowing in the sunlight.

After a few seconds, however, the crowd grew silent. They sensed that something was missing, that the portrait was unfinished. The great artist then walked over to where the little clear piece of glass lay, picked it up, and placed it in the portrait, right in the center of Jesus' eye. As the sun hit that little piece, it gave off a dazzling sparkle.

The magnificent stained-glass window still draws visitors. The first thing they see is that sparkle in Jesus' eye.

Do you ever feel like that little piece of clear glass? Left out. Untalented. A disappointment. You doubt you can ever do anything for God. Let the story of that last little piece remind you that God thinks of you as "the apple of his eye" (Psalm 17:8). No matter that in your eyes you don't measure up to others; you are an important part of the body of Christ. (1 Corinthians 12)

NOTICE BOARD

Garden Party

Morris House garden party will take place on June 9 from 2.30pm to 4.30pm. Do come and support it. The proceeds will go into Residents' Amenities Fund. For further details, contact Sheila Wheeler or Mary Mercer. Tel. 02083409660.

Outreach

Outreach to Hornsey Lane Estate is expected to commence in June. Are you praying about the part God would want you to play? God is looking for foot soldiers, who will give out appropriate literature, give a word in season and lift up holy hands in prayer. Can He depend on you?

Summer barbeque

Our summer barbeque will take place on July 15th. Tickets will be available soon. Watch this space.

THE LORD HAS DONE GREAT THINGS FOR US

We rejoice with Funmi and Mark Haggerty on the birth of their baby girl Amy. She was born on 25th April and weighed 5lbs.

PRAISE THE LORD

THANKSGIVING AND PRAYER REQUESTS

This month we pray for members of our church family whose surnames begin with A, B, C

Abdulai Janet; Agbelusi Tolu, Bolurin, Sope, Dele and Iyabo; Alvis Daisy; Anand Luke and Renu; Bala, Hassan, Benjamin Janet, Becessar Devin; Bentham Mervin and Anita; Brewer, Steve, Burrell Cecil; Carter Carlene & Jean; Christian Ina, Clarke Joan, Cole Christine, Coxall Joan, Crawford Janet.

WHY PRAY?

Fellowship or communion require a dialog - God and you! God does not need you and I to be God and He is not less fulfilled because someone is refusing to have fellowship with Him. We, rather than God, are the ones that desperately need to reconnect with God. Our search for meaning in life and the desire to make our lives count are expressions of our deep longings to reconnect with the God that made us. As long as people do not get to the point of 'dialoguing' (praying) with God regularly, their lives will remain empty, unfulfilled, frustrated and even depressed.

A second reason to pray is that your resources cannot meet your needs and therefore you need to turn to God who owns everything and can supply all your needs.

Thirdly, God commands us to pray. Whether there is benefit in praying or not, that is beside the point. We cannot ignore God's command to pray or any other command for that matter and go scot-free. God delights in your prayers, don't deny Him. Your family, friends, nation, etc are being supported by your prayers; don't pull the plug on them. You yourself need your own prayer to remain sane in this world; don't go crazy by not praying.

Prayer is not a spiritual gift but a Command! All through Scriptures, God calls on His people to pray. Just a few examples will suffice for now: 2Chrn. 7:14; Jer. 33:3; 1Thess 5:17; "Watch and pray so that you do not fall into temptation..." Matt. 26:41. God gave you 24 hours a day and commanded you to use part of that time to pray. When you choose to use the time for something else He did not command you to do, what excuse can you give to God? If we are not obeying God, then we are not following Him. Sounds too hard? Sometimes that is how the truth sounds and certainly now. Follow Jesus to the garden and tarry in prayer. Job, fatigue, etc are not excuses. Ask Peter!

Grace and Sunday Bwanhot

WISE SAYINGS FOR TROUBLED TIMES

Life is like an onion; you peel it off one layer at a time, and sometimes you weep. Carl Sandburg

The true meaning of life is to plant trees under whose shade you do not expect to sit. Nelson Henderson

Pray that your loneliness may spur you into finding something to live for, great enough to die for.”
Dag Hammarskjold

Trying times are not the times to stop trying.

Perseverance is not a long race, it is many short races one after another

A commitment is doing what you said you would do, long after the feeling you said it in has passed.

I'd rather stand trial before people for serving God than to stand trial before God for serving people.

If you find a pathway with no obstacles, it probably doesn't lead anywhere.

Your attitude toward your trouble often hurts you more than the trouble.

For the Christian, dark clouds of trouble are but the shadow of God's wing.

When troubles call on you, call God.

The Back Pew - Jeff Larson

I am too blessed to be stressed.

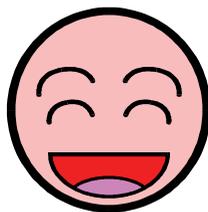


In any circumstance I have learned the secret of being content whether well fed or hungry, whether in abundance or in need. Phil 4:12

LAUGHTER LINES

LAWSUITS IN THE U.S. OF A.

Kathleen Robertson was awarded \$780,000 by a jury of her peers after breaking her ankle tripping over a toddler who was running inside a furniture store. The owners of the store were understandably surprised at the verdict, considering the misbehaving little toddler was Ms Robertson's son!



Nineteen-year-old Carl Truman won \$74,000 and medical expenses when his neighbour ran over his hand with a Honda Accord. Mr Truman apparently didn't notice there was someone at the wheel of the car when he was trying to steal his neighbour's hubcaps.

OLD AGE

Sometimes when I feel like I'm getting older I'm reminded of the little boy who was talking to his grandfather. The little boy said, "Grandpa, I heard you say that all the people who were alive when the flood came were killed, except for Noah and his family, because of their sin. Is that right?"

And the grandfather said, "That's right son.."

The little boy replied, "Well, if that's true, then how did you and grandma make it through?"

Bundle of Laughs- J John And Mark Stibbe

WHO IS THE BOSS?

One evening my husband, Mark, and our preschooler, Krystal, were on the couch chatting. "Daddy, you're the boss of the house, right?" I overheard her ask sweetly. My husband proudly replied, "Yes, I'm the boss of the house."

But Krystal quickly burst his bubble when she added, "Cause Mommy put you in charge, huh Daddy?"

-- Rhonda Mony, Lake Elsinore, California. Christian Reader, "Kids of the Kingdom."

LAUGHTER LINES

CHURCHGOING

In one church, the pastor, apparently fed up with all the excuses given over the years as to why people don't go to church, included "Ten reasons why I never wash" in the Sunday bulletin:

1. I was forced to as a child.
2. People who wash are hypocrites—they think they are cleaner than everybody else.
3. There are so many different kinds of soap, I can't decide which one is best.
4. I used to wash, but I got bored and stopped.
5. I wash only on special occasions, like Christmas and Easter.
6. None of my friends wash.
7. I'll start washing when I get older and dirtier.
8. I can't spare the time.
9. The bathroom is never warm enough in winter or cool enough in summer
10. People who make soap are only after your money.

TEACHERS

A school teacher injured his back and had to wear a plaster cast around the upper part of his body. It fitted under his shirt and was not noticeable at all.

On the first day of term, still with the cast under his shirt, he found himself assigned to the toughest students in school. Walking confidently into the rowdy classroom, he opened the window as wide as possible and then busied himself with desk work. When a strong breeze made his tie flap, he took the desk stapler and stapled the tie to his chest.

Discipline was not a problem from that day forth!

Bundle of Delights- J John And Mark Stibbe

STORY OF THE MONTH

THE 'DEATH OF THE GOOD SAMARITAN'

One day, a priest was walking down a country lane when he heard cries coming from a ditch on the other side of the road. "Help me! Help me, please!" The priest stopped and strained his neck to see into the ditch. Then he called across the road, "What happened to you?"



"I was travelling to town when I was attacked, beaten, and robbed. Please help me, I can't move," the voice responded. The priest paused for a moment. Then he yelled back to the voice in the ditch. "Listen, there's this guy called the Good Samaritan who always helps people in need. He should be coming down the road any time now. He'll help you. I don't know anything about first aid and I wouldn't want to make things worse."

"Wait, you don't understand, I'm ..." But the priest had already gone on his way. Soon, another man came walking along the road. This man was a Levite. "Help me! Help me, please!" The Levite stopped in the road and looked from side to side. "Who was that? Who said that?" "I did, over here!" called the voice from the ditch on the other side of the road.

"You talkin' to me?" asked the Levite? "Yes, you! I was travelling to town when I was attacked, beaten, and robbed. I need your help!" "Oh," said the Levite, gazing into the ditch. "You do sound like someone who could use some help. Wait a minute! Attacked? Beaten? Robbed? What a coincidence. That reminds me of a story a fellow named Jesus told! Ever heard of him?" "Yeah, I know the story. Now, can you help me?"

"Actually, I'm in quite a rush. But I'm sure that someone else will be along shortly to help you. Someone called...um...the Good Samaritan! That's it! He'll be along soon. This is a busy road, you know."

continued on next page

The 'Death of the Good Samaritan'

"Couldn't you help me? I'm feeling very weak, I can't ..."
"I'm sorry, but I'm not the Good Samaritan. I'm the Levite. If I helped you, it would ruin the story."

You wouldn't want me to do that, now, would you?" "No, I wouldn't want you to do that, but I think it's already...Wait! Come back!"

"Patience there, chap! I'm sure the Good Samaritan will be along shortly," the Levite said as he went on his way. "Ohhhh...I can't last much longer," the wounded man said softly. Soon another man came walking along the same road. He ran over to the ditch when he heard the man crying.

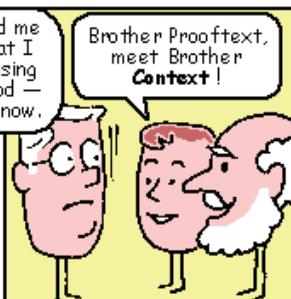
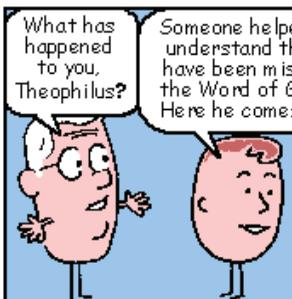
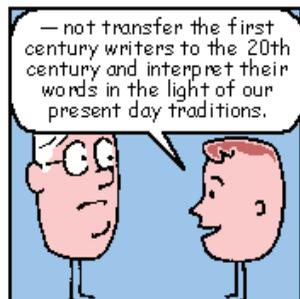
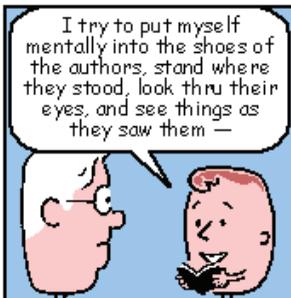
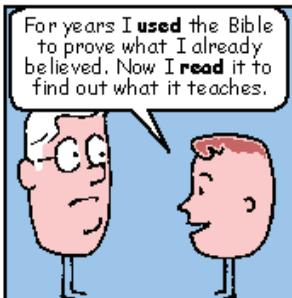
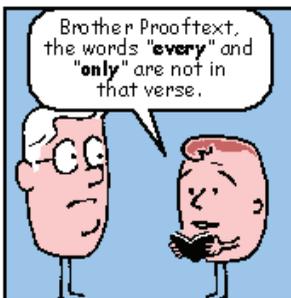
"Oh my goodness! What happened?" "I was travelling to town when I was attacked, beaten, and robbed. Two other men have walked by and haven't helped me. Please help me. I can't move." The traveller peered in at the wounded figure lying on the ground in front of him. Finally he said, "Wait a minute...you look familiar. Where are you from?" "Samaria."

"Do you by any chance have a nickname?" he asked, suddenly excited. "Me? Oh, some people call me **the Good Samaritan** because I helped an injured man on this road a while back."

"Yes! Yes! Well, sir, **I was the man you helped!** All this time I have been looking for you because I wanted to pay you back! Wow, this is great! I can't wait until I find my friends and tell them that I actually met up with you again! And now I can finally pay you back! Look, here are two silver coins—exactly what you gave that innkeeper. I feel so much better having finally repaid you. This is wonderful!"

continued on page 15

HOW DO YOU READ THE SCRIPTURES?



The death of the good Samaritan

The grateful man, who had himself once been attacked, beaten, and robbed, laid the two silver coins in the dust next to the wounded man and then cheerfully went on his way, whistling a happy tune. "Wait, wait! I don't want your money..." whispered the man from Samaria. But it was too late. The other man was already gone.

And so, the Good Samaritan died quietly in a ditch by the side of the road.

Jesus told the original story of the Good Samaritan to teach us how to love. But like the grateful man in this take on the parable, we sometimes miss the point. Love is more than words; it's more than a feeling; more than doing what's easy and convenient. Love means getting down in the ditch with someone to give them what they really need. It means getting dirty and being inconvenienced. Sometimes it means "laying down your life for a friend" (John 15:13). Jesus did that for us.

REPUTATION AND CHARACTER

A busybody is often interested in telling only half the truth. It's true that Christ kept company with publicans and sinners, not because He loved and practiced their sin but so that He could influence and win them. A defamatory article about a Christian appeared in a newspaper. It was really terrible. "You must sue him," a friend said. "No," was the answer. "I shall try to set him straight. I'm afraid if I sue him I shall do something that is improper. I learned early in life, and from long experience, that man's character can only be harmed by himself. The first step for me to win my detractor is to overcome my own passion for vengeance." Reputation is what other people think and say of you, but character is what you yourself decide you shall be. If you belong to Christ, then your decision is to be like Him--and by His grace you can be.

Stories for Preachers

Motto /Text for the year
"I CAN DO EVERYTHING THROUGH HIM WHO GIVES
ME STRENGTH" *PHIL. 4:13*

FINDING OUT ABOUT ...CHRIST CHURCH?

Tel/Fax: 020 8340 1566

We are a family of men and women, boys and girls who are trying 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 resources 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** - **8.00am.** Holy Communion (Book of Common Prayer)
- **10.30am.** Main service with Crèche facilities

There is family/parade service once every month– usually the third Sunday of the month unless otherwise indicated.

- **6.00pm.** Evening worship

ACTIVITIES FOR THE WEEK

- Monday - Baby n' Toddler Group (**10.00 am to 12 noon**) -Term time only
- Brownies meeting in Church (**5.30 pm**)
- Next Prayer Meetings 21st May & 4th & 18th June (**8pm**)
- Wednesday - Bible Fellowship in the Hall (**7:45pm**)
- Friday - Home Group at Flat 10, 3 Waverley Road, N8 (**2.30 pm**)
- Scouts meeting in church and hall (**6.00 pm**)

Enquiry/Counselling - please phone 020 8340 1566

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YOUR COMMENTS AND CONTRIBUTIONS ARE WELCOME

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