



CHRIST CHURCH
CROUCH END HILL
LONDON N8 8AX

CROSSLINKS

JESUS THE GOOD SHEPHERD

A MAGAZINE OF THE CHURCH ON THE HILL



SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2005 ISSUE 6.66

Vicar's three minute reflection THE LORD IS MY SHEPHERD



Psalm 23 is a beautiful Psalm that my spirit resonates with whenever I meditate on its words. I became so enthralled with it that for a long time, I thought it was David who first used the shepherd metaphor to describe God. But I was wrong. The patriarch Jacob, as he was dying, looked back over his life and summed it up with these words: "God...has been my shepherd all my life to this day" (Gen. 48:15). The symbolism the image carries is one of helpless, defenceless, and at times wayward creatures content to feed under the watchful eye of One they have learned to trust.

The problem with most of us is that we have no clear picture of God we long to worship. Our image of Him is clouded by the memory of pastors and priests who have portrayed Him as a tyrant, a hard taskmaster, who is too eager to punish us whenever we stray off the right path—or by the memory of absent, weak or wicked fathers who were brutal and emotionally detached from their children.

David was a shepherd himself. He must have remembered the times when he led his sheep through danger and they huddled close to his heels. He knew the sheep by name and he was acquainted with all their ways. The presence of the shepherd was all the assurance a sheep needed. The shepherd is aware of the personality and peculiarity of each sheep. There are little ones that have to be carried, the cripples that can't keep up, the old sheep that can barely get along, the timid ones that are afraid to get along. The good shepherd knows them all and loves them.

God knows our stories and is aware of the possibilities of evil in our nature. He's aware of the reasons for our moodiness, our hurt and frustrations, our temper tantrums. Others may be put off by our disposition, but God never turns away. He stays there even if it has to cost Him His Son. No wonder, Jesus declared that He is the good shepherd and the good shepherd lays down His life for His sheep.

... the good shepherd lays down His life for His sheep.



In Psalm 23, the Psalmist elaborates many things that the Shepherd will do for him hence his conclusion that he will never be in want. J.I Packer commenting on this Psalm said, " life tends to be complicated. For example, there are very few blanket insurance policies which cover every need and eventuality. You have to take out separate policies for your house, car, holiday, income, life, etc" The psalmist suggests that it is God who can provide the type of universal insurance that we need.

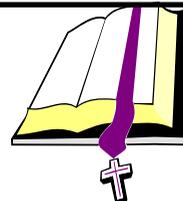
He provides guidance and direction, which is unique and adequate for each person. He provides peace and rest in the midst of hassles. He reveals what is right and wrong. His powerful presence can conquer loneliness, fear and death. He equips us to serve him from his rich treasury. He gives emotional as well as practical support.

You may wonder why the Shepherd does all of this. Verse three tells us. " For His name's sake." You see the very character and name of God is on the line. If He doesn't lead His sheep and if He doesn't feed His sheep, then He has disgraced His own name. Thus, all of His leading is so that His name may be glorified. "For His name's sake" denotes the honour and character of God Himself. His name "Wonderful" is at stake and being Wonderful, he takes care of the distresses of life. His name "Counselor" is at stake and being Counselor, He takes care of the decisions of life. His name "The mighty God" is at stake, and being the mighty God, He takes care of the dilemmas of life. I can go on and on. Can you pause and reflect on how much God loves you and how wonderful it is that He chose to love you? Do not allow any salesperson to sell the idea of a kill-joy, wicked and uncaring God to you. Look at the Cross. The death of Christ for you tells all the story about God's love for you. Enjoy it and let your experience bring glory to His name.

Dele Agbelusi.

Memory Verse

He tends his flock like a Shepherd: He gathers the lambs in his arms and carries them close to his heart; he gently leads those that have young. (Isaiah 40:11)



HEAVEN'S GROCERY STORE



I was walking down life's highway a long time ago
One day I saw a sign that read
"Heaven's Grocery Store"

As I got a little closer the door came open wide
And when I came to myself I was standing inside
I saw a host of angels, they were standing everywhere
One handed me a basket and said "My child shop with ease"
Everything a Christian needs was in the grocery store
And all you could not carry you could come next day for more

First I got some patience; love was in the same row
Further down was understanding,
you need that wherever you go

I got a box or two of wisdom, a bag or two of faith.
I stopped to get some courage to help me run this race.

By then my basket was getting full
but I remembered some grace

I did not forget salvation, for salvation is free
So I tried to get enough to save both you and me

Then I started up to the counter to pay my grocery bill
For I thought I had everything to do my Master's will
As I went up the aisle I saw prayer, I just had to put that in
For I knew when I stepped outside I would run right into sin
Peace and joy were plentiful, they were on the last shelf
Songs and praise were hanging near, so I just helped myself.

Then I said to the angel "How much do I owe?"
He just said "Take these wherever you go"

Again I said "How much do I owe?"
He smiled and said "My child, Jesus paid your bill long ago!"

CONQUERING DISAPPOINTMENT.

Disappointment can corrode a marriage like rust eats away at a car. Any number of things—a spouse's unemployment, a chronic illness, a serious betrayal—these things often kill marriages.

This is where a spiritual perspective may not only help—but be essential. Faith does not deny disappointment. Some things really are awful. But we must look for answers. Dr. Paul Brand may have the best answer to this conundrum. Renowned for his work with leprosy patients, Brand responded to the question, "Where is God when it hurts?" "He is in you, the one hurting, not in it, the thing that hurts."

We may find ourselves placing our hope in many things: our spouse, our careers, our health. Yet these things have their limitations. Spouses, being human, will disappoint. Careers change; health fades.

But God doesn't. Ultimately, our hope is in him. It's important to remember he is in us when we hurt. It is, perhaps, even more important to remember he is also in our spouse. The couples I have observed who have come through disappointment have done so first by God's grace, and second by holding firmly to each other. They have affirmed that the "we" is stronger than the "it" of disappointment. And their marriages are better for it.

Elizabeth Cody Newenhuyse

**Brand
responded to the
question,
"Where is God
when it hurts?"
"He is in you, the
one hurting,
not in it,
the thing that
hurts."**

**Those who see God's hand in everything
can leave everything in God's hands.**

ANY LIFE AFTER DEATH?

Once upon a time, twin boys were conceived in the womb. The spark of life grew and each tiny brain began to take shape and form. With the development of their brain came feeling, and with feeling, perception—a perception of surroundings, of each other, and their own lives. They discovered that life was good, and they laughed and rejoiced in their hearts.

One said to the other, "We are sure lucky to have been conceived and to have this wonderful world."

The other chimed in, "Yes, blessed be our mother who gave us life and each other."

The twins continued to grow and soon their arms and fingers, legs and toes began to take shape. They explored their little world and found the life cord which gave them life from their mother's blood. They were grateful for this new discovery and sang, "How great is the love of our mother—that she shares all she has with us!" Weeks passed into months and with the advent of each new month, they noticed a change in each other and in themselves.

"We are changing," one said. "What can it mean?"

"It means," said the other, "that we are drawing near to birth."

An unsettling chill crept over the two. They were afraid of birth, for they knew that it meant leaving their wonderful world behind.

Said the one, "Were it up to me, I would live here forever."

"But we must be born," said the other. "It has happened to all the others." Indeed, there was evidence inside the womb that the mother had carried life before theirs. "And I believe that there is life after birth, don't you?"

"How can there be life after birth?" cried the one. "Do we not shed our life cord and also the blood tissue when we are born? And have you ever talked to anyone that has been born? Has anyone ever re-entered the womb after birth to describe what birth is like? NO!"

(continued on page 9)



NOTICE BOARD

YOUTH WORKER

The church is looking for a Christian youth worker who loves the Lord passionately and is able to work with the church's team to develop our Youth and Community ministry. The applicant is expected to put in 17.5 hours a week - two week-days and Sundays. Fewer ours could be negotiated. Please contact the vicar for more information.

LICENCING AS LAY READER

After completing a three- year programme of studies including a six week attachment, **IYABO AGBELUSI** will be licensed as a lay reader on 24th September at St. Mary the Virgin NW1. Time, 11am. **You are all welcome to attend the service.**

FAIR TRADE - CHRIST CHURCH

Wanted - a member of the church to organise a Fair Trade stall twice a year (more if you are so motivated). All that is required is to contact the local Fair Trade representative prior to organising the event, and she will deliver the goods to the church, set up the stall in the church and sell the goods. Any one interested, please contact Vera Freeburne for further details.

CONGRATULATIONS

FUNMI AND MARK HAGGERTY. They were married at Lagos in July, 2005. We rejoice with them and pray that their home will enjoy the peace and love of Christ.

THANKSGIVING AND PRAYER REQUESTS

This month we pray for members of our church family whose surnames begin with Q, R, S, T, W & Y.

Quintyne Angela, Ramsay Malcolm, Randall Harold, Redman Byron, Room Terry, Sharif-de-Groot Aaltje, Springer Valerie, Stevens Paul and Sue, Stockwell Muriel, Tasker Rosemary, Topping Roger and Constance, Tucker Diana, Turner Carol, Tumalu Annette, Watson Granville, Wheeler Sheila, Yaya Funmi (now Haggerty).

BIBLE QUIZ

1. What do you call a story that teaches spiritual truth. It was often used by Jesus?
2. What would you call a tenth part of a person's crop or income given to God?
3. What is the name of a sweet-smelling resin that was very valuable? It served as a medicine for preparing bodies for burial.
4. A food eaten by the Israelites during their travels in the wilderness.
5. To go without food for a while as a religious duty?
6. Psalm 150 exhorts us to praise God with musical instruments. How many instruments are specifically mentioned? 10, 8, 6. (Choose one answer)
7. Two Psalms are noted for the theme of confession and forgiveness of sin. Name the one that appears first in the book of Psalms. Psalm 21, Psalm 32, or Psalm 43.
8. Two Psalms are noted for the theme of confession and forgiveness of sin. Name the one that appears second in the book of Psalms. Psalm 45, Psalm 62, or Psalm 51.
9. In the book of Proverbs, who is compared to "a madman who throws firebrands, arrows, and death" - The practical joker, the scoffer or the adulterer?
10. "A proud look, A lying tongue, [and] Hands that shed innocent blood are abominations to the Lord. How many abominations are on that list in Proverbs - 3, 7 or 12.
11. Fill in the blanks: (John 5:21) Jesus declared Himself equal in power to God when He told the Jews, "For as the Father raises the ___ and gives ___ to them, even so the ___ gives life to whom He will."
12. How long did Jesus pray before choosing His twelve disciples; 3 days, all night or a Sabbath?
(1-5 submitted by Adrian and Susan Ogilvie-Arendse)

ANY LIFE AFTER DEATH?

(from page 6)

As he spoke, he fell into despair, and in his despair he moaned, "If the purpose of conception and our growth inside the womb is to end in birth, then truly our life is senseless." He clutched his precious life cord to his breast and said, "And if this is so, and life is absurd, then there really can be no mother!"

"But there is a mother," protested the other. "Who else gave us nourishment? Who else created this world for us?"

"We get our nourishment from this cord—and our world has always been here!" said the one. "And if there is a mother—where is she? Have you ever seen her? Does she ever talk to you? No! We invented the mother when we were young because it satisfied a need in us. It made us feel secure and happy."

Is this not how many of us talk about life after death and of God and his provisions?

Thus, while the one raved and despaired, the other resigned himself to birth and placed his trust in the hands of his mother. Hours turned into days, and days into weeks. And soon it was time. They both knew their birth was at hand, and they both feared what they did not know. As the one was first to be conceived, so he was the first to be born, the other following.

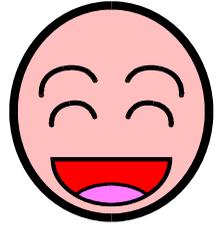
They cried as they were born into the light. They coughed out fluid and gasped the dry air. And when they were sure they had been born, they opened their eyes—seeing life after birth for the very first time. What they saw was the beautiful eyes of their mother, as they were cradled lovingly in her arms. They were home.

Adapted from Youth Specialties Inc.

Is this not how many of us talk about life after death and of God and his provisions? The Scripture says "No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him" (1 Corinthians 2:9).

LAUGHTER LINES

OUT OF THE MOUTHS ...



A minister was in the middle of taking the wedding service of an older couple from his parish when he began to get the impression that something was not quite right, even though the congregation was in place, the day was sunny enough, and the music melodious. No, the trouble seemed to be in front of him, coming from the bridal party. The groom was fidgety and unsettled, but the clergyman was not in a position to find out immediately what was wrong. The bride was seen to be muttering when the best man suddenly turned and walked out of the church.

The priest was perplexed. Thankfully, a hymn was approaching and he decided he would inquire of the couple as to their problem once the congregation started singing.

However, he had only got to the point of announcing the number of the hymn when the best man rushed back in to the church and handed a box to the groom.

'Ah, that's it,' thought the vicar, 'they have forgotten the wedding rings.'

He was taken aback to see the groom open the box, pull out a pair of false teeth and slip them into his mouth, just in time to say 'I will'.

Colin Blakely—'It's the Gospel Truth'

POLITICAL CORRECTNESS GONE MAD!

This sign was posted in a personnel office: "We had to cancel our advertisement seeking responsible, mature adults. The court ruled that it discriminated against irresponsible, immature adults."

LAUGHTER LINES

BETWEEN TWO THIEVES

As an old preacher was dying, he summoned two of his members to his bedside. These two, known for their dishonest business dealings, had often sat squirming when the old man preached against avarice and greed. The two were uncomfortable and finally asked the preacher why he had called them to his bedside. The preacher replied, "Jesus died between two thieves and I want to go the same way."

Don & Marie Spooner

COPS AND ROBBERS

A little boy was travelling with his mother over the holidays. As they approached the airline ticket counter the little guy informed the agent that he was two years old. Suspiciously, the agent looked down at the boy and asked, "Do you know what happens to little boys who lie?" The young traveller smiled, "Yep, they get to fly for half price!"

* Arizona Highways, Oct. 1995, p. 48

PRAYER FOR THE DEAF

It was bedtime for Timmy and Jimmy who were staying overnight with their grand parents. While kneeling to say his prayers, Timmy began praying at the top of his voice, "Dear God, for Christmas I want some video games, a motor bike, a DVD player..."

"Whoa" Jimmy hollered, "Why are you yelling? God ain't deaf."

"I know God's not deaf," replied Timmy. "But Grandma is!"

"From The World's Greatest Collection of Church Jokes, published by Barbour Publishing, Inc. Used by permission."

CHURCH WARDEN'S PIPES

Ever heard of a churchwarden's pipe? I hadn't until I was watching 'Flog-it', and saw one on the show. The pipes are a very long stemmed tobacco pipe made of clay, approximately 22-26 inches long. They are very collectable, and in good condition are worth over three figures. The origin of the name is uncertain, but it is thought to be a jibe at churchwardens, who it was believed had time to sit down and smoke a long pipe.

Vera Freeburne

YOU ARE NOT ALONE

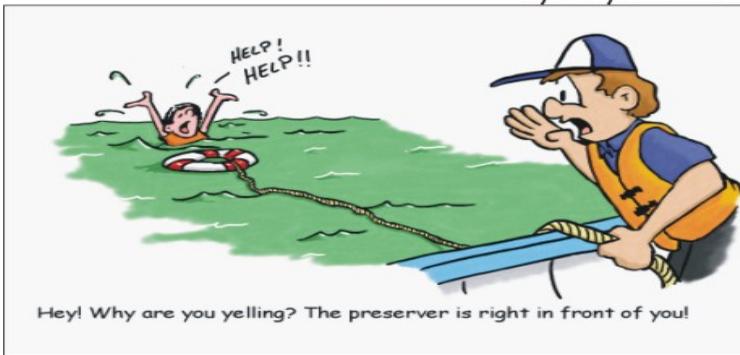
In the past two weeks, the focus of the United States of America and the world have been on Hurricane Katrina and the havoc it has caused. Thousands of people have lost their lives and families, and about 90 square miles of the U.S. was destroyed leaving about 1 million U.S. citizens displaced.

We are all together in pain and there Jesus is with us. When we come together in compassion to help, He is there with us. We are not alone. He is one sure Helper, Comforter, Provider and Shepherd that thousands of Katrina cannot take away from us.

D.A.

KARTOON KNUGGETS

By Troy Knechtel



OUR HEAVENLY FATHER

Dearly Beloved

If you had a father who knew everything about you, would you be in dread of him or be drawn to him? Your answer is as mine... I will dread his presence when I do things that are wrong, but will be quick to run to him to express all the right things I have done. Fortunately or unfortunately our fathers are very limited and we are able to hide some of our ugly sides from them. We fear that our fathers will love us less if they knew those ugly sides. God, our heavenly Father, knows us more than we know ourselves and knows about the ugly things we do. Nevertheless He loves us as if we were doing everything perfectly right. He grieves more than we grieve when we do wrong, yet He reaches out to restore us to Himself and comfort us.

If you have issues with your imperfect earthly father, do not equate our heavenly Father with him. Trust our Father who is in heaven and make sure that you do not have issues with Him. Run to Him and not from Him.

Sunday Bwanhot

Answers to Quiz

1. parable
2. tithe
3. myrrh (John 19:39)
4. manna
5. fast
6. 8 (Psalm 150:3-5)
7. Psalm 32
8. Psalm 51
9. The practical joker - (Proverbs 26:18,19)
10. 7 (Proverbs 6: 16-19)
11. Dead, life ... Son" (John 5:21)
12. All night (Luke 6:12)

POETRY FROM SALLY ROBERTS

MEDITATION

In the stillness of this room
Lord, you are there.
In the quietness of prayer
Lord, you are there.

In the calling of a seagull as he flies
in the sunshine in a frosty morning sky;
In the courage when the earth is cold
of bulbs that I see grow;
In the grass so green, so quiet that lies
beneath the snow.
I am aware and this I surely know
Lord, you are there.

In our times of stress and anguish deep despair-
in our joys and in our laughter
Lord you share.
When we offer thanks for knowing that
so often we are blessed;
When we know you will not fail us
Tho' we falter at our task
Lord, you are there.

Teach us to be patient
To serve and do our share
Knowing in quiet and confidence
Lord, You are always there.

Sally Ruby Roberts (1922—2005)

AWAY FROM IT ALL

"In April I was in a bit of a stew. I had given up my job of seven years, with the status and financial security it brought me, to focus full time on studying a form of theatre which, though I find irresistibly beautiful and significant, is little-known and financially - let's say - unpromising...

My head was full of disapproving voices. I came out in a skin rash. I could feel anxiety locked in my jaw.

So I decided to go on retreat in a convent on the Isle of Wight. It was only one weekend but I returned with the feeling that someone had changed the filter through which I looked out at the world. After two days of reflection, surrounded by the peace of nature and the nuns of St Cecilia's Abbey, I felt calmness descend on me. I sat down to try and understand what had changed. These words are the result.

Being away from it all, out of my usual routine, I immediately found it easier to exist in the moment. I stopped gnawing at memories, indulging in regrets, agonising over future decisions. I abandoned my world of inner voices and trusted God to inspire me at the time of decision-making. Taking an analogy from my theatre technique, it was as if I was living life more in a state of improvisation, rather than regurgitating some hackneyed text.

In this state of improvisation I saw life as an adventure again, not a series of predictable routines to be lived out patiently and dutifully. My senses were on full alert. I saw, heard, sensed the world more keenly. My eyes were opened to the beauty of nature and of people. With this heightened awareness, I found I could respond better to each situation. What is this person telling me they need, what can I say/do to respond? I felt so much more alive and useful.

I also found myself taking a less judgemental stance. When someone barged past me at the checkout queue or the cashier slammed down my change without acknowledging me, I was able to bypass the silent curses and instead wonder: why is this person acting like that? What can I do to help them?

It's harder back here in the flurry and routine of London life. But the effort always seems to pay off!"

Tania Coke

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**)
- Prayer meeting 12th, 26th September and 10th, 31st October (**8pm**)
- Wednesday - Bible Fellowship in the Hall (**7:30pm**)
- Wednesday - Home Group 17 Coleridge Road N8 8EH (**10:00 am**)
- 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

Editorial Board: Iyabo Agbelusi, Grace Macauley, Dele Agbelusi

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Church Wardens: Peter Green, Charles Murphy

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Organist: Harold Randall

**YOUR COMMENTS AND CONTRIBUTIONS ARE WELCOME
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