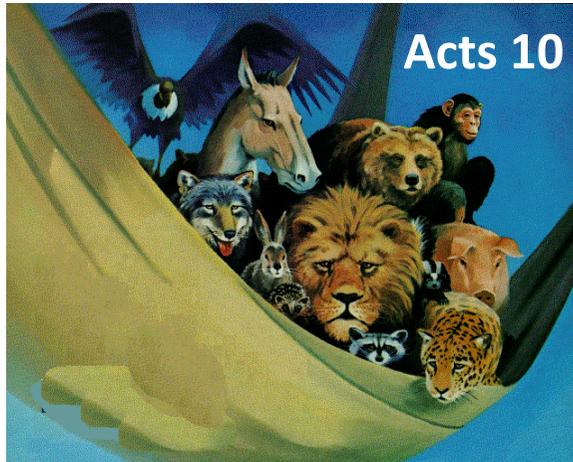




Sunday 11th July 2021



What is God showing us in the sheet?

We meet at The Salvation Army Hall Sunday 10.00 am.

Also Sunday worship on is on  YouTube

The easiest way to find the link to the YouTube meeting each Sunday is to find the link on the Corps web page. Type.....

www.salvationarmy.org.uk/ramsgate and select **Church on YouTube**

<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/8651865167>

Ramsgate ZOOM 8651865167

AND DVDs of the service are available for those who would like them



What's happening at Ramsgate Salvation Army?

Sunday 11 th	10.00 am	Prayer at the Hall (Join by ZOOM)
Sunday 11 th	10.15 am	WORSHIP at Salvation Army Hall
Sunday 11 th	11.30 am	ZOOM fellowship
Sunday 11 th	12.00 noon	NO Sunday School
Sunday 11 th	4.30 pm	ZOOM Children's Church Kids Club (up to 11 years)
Monday to Friday	(6.30am-9am)	Breakfast Drop-in (street homeless only)
Monday 12 th		 Little Fishes Toddler Group 9.30am – 11am
Tuesday 13 th	7.00pm	ZOOM Bible study Mercy Seat week 3
Wednesday 14 th	2pm – 4pm	NO "Summer in the Garden" (see page 6)
Wednesday 14 th	7.00pm	Music leaders meeting (ZOOM)
Friday 16 th	(10am - 12 noon)	War Cry Ministry Ramsgate
Friday 16 th	(10am - 12 noon)	Food Bank
Sunday 18 th		Youth Church



There is a full day of activities on Fortress Radio. <https://www.fortressradio.online/listen-now.html>



And don't forget Songs of Praise Sunday at 13.15pm

Maggie is available with the constant prayer line where you can call or text for prayer. You can contact her on 07840 753 603

Daily Hope offers music, prayers and reflections as well as full worship services from the Church of England at the end of a telephone line.



Birthdays

Jean Spearing	Monday 12-July
Diane. Letts	Friday 16-July
Michael O'Grady	Friday 16-July
Beryl Furlong	Sunday 18-July

Prayers please for

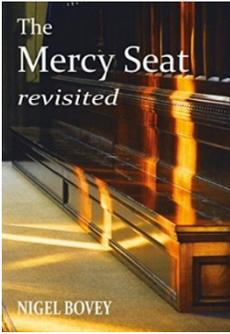
For the friends and family of **Val** Rose promoted to Glory, funeral at Thanet Crematorium on Wednesday 14th 10.45am. For **Josette** after her fall, for **Rita**, the sister of Anna. **Rita's** treatment is said to have been successful, but the requi medication is causing many detrimental side effects and she has significant caring responsibilities for her children.

For **Gwen** Wren following her hospital treatment. Continued prayers for **Jean Mayton, Chris**, a friend of Gay, **Sam**, step mum to Hollie, **Grant** and **Al** and **David** and **John** McCairn all waiting for medical treatment. For **Archie**, Lisa and Scott. For **Paul** and **Sue Taylor**. For **Tara** and for **Angela** and **Jean S** who are all due tests and examinations and await results.

For all those suffering from **Long Covid** – which include some in our church family.



We are still receiving the Thank You cards we made available last week and so are delaying their final distribution until next week.



ZOOM BIBLE STUDY (TUESDAY at 7pm)

Until our Summer break we will examine the Mercy Seat and ask how we view it today.

Try and join us this Tuesday at 7pm

Major Bovey will join on Tuesday 20th July and we can ask him questions.

COMMISSIONING SATURDAY 10th JULY



Pray for David and Maria as they come to this significant stage in their continuing ministry journey. You can watch today's commissioning. These are the links – and we will put them on our web page so you can find them in the same

way as our Sunday YouTube service

2pm <https://youtu.be/vXqw8HA3fmQ>

6pm <https://youtu.be/0e-QhHyBX0Q>

Today, Saturday 10 July the Cadets of the Messengers of Grace Session will be commissioned as Salvation Army Officers following two years of training at William Booth College.

They will have signed their Officer's covenant which says:-

'Called by God to proclaim the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ as an Officer of the Salvation Army, to love and serve Him supremely all my day, to live to win souls and make their Salvation the first purpose of my life.'

Please pray for the Cadets of the Messengers of Grace session as today they are commissioned and ordained as Salvation Army officers.

the Post- Quarantine Church

The logo for 'the Post-Quarantine Church' features the text 'the Post-Quarantine Church' in a bold, black, sans-serif font. The words are stacked vertically. To the right of the text, there is a red shield-shaped logo with the words 'THE SALVATION ARMY' in white. Several colorful, wavy lines in shades of green, orange, blue, red, and purple cross through the text and the shield.

We learned this week that almost all restrictions to control Covid will be removed from 19th July. Whilst infection rates are rising there seems evidence that the vaccination is providing protection and preventing hospitalisation and serious illness.

So, do you feel it is safe to return to gathered worship?

Now that we have clarity on the government position (we are waiting for confirmation from the Salvation Army) the Corps Council will meet (Monday 19th) and discuss how we introduce our post-covid programme.

From Sunday 25th July we expect to be able to return to the worship we have missed so much. As I write the musical sections are discussing how they will resume but we do hope to be able to provide what you have missed so much these last 16 months.

NEWSLETTER The last weekly delivered newsletter with the printed Sunday service will be produced on 17th July. We will replace it with a monthly newsletter and deliver to those who are unable to come to worship. We will ensure that your Salvation Army publications are delivered as well.

YouTube The last pre-recorded YouTube service will be on Sunday 18th July .

- DVD We will stop the production of the DVD with the **pre-recorded** service.
- ZOOM We will discuss the future of ZOOM. We expect that some meetings may continue in the way.
- LIVE STREAM For those unable to meet for worship we will experiment with live streaming of the service. We do not have the correct equipment to do this professionally (**yet – we are praying**) but hope what we can do will provide a connection for those who cannot – or are not ready to - come to gathered worship. We will record this and produce it on DVD for those who cannot access the internet.
- YP newsletter This will also finish on 17th July. We are planning some summer activity workshops and a return to Kids Club and Sunday school in September.
- Other Activities We will be discussing this at Corps Council next week and hope to give you more news very soon.



Hi everyone,

You may or not know that I had a full liver transplant at King's College Hospital on 19th November 2020 and after my recovery and shielding for six months, I am now back at work.

Without a doubt, the surgeons and the nursing staff, saved my life and in return I have promised to raise some money by taking part in the Great Hospital Hike on 18th September 2021. Please give whatever you can.

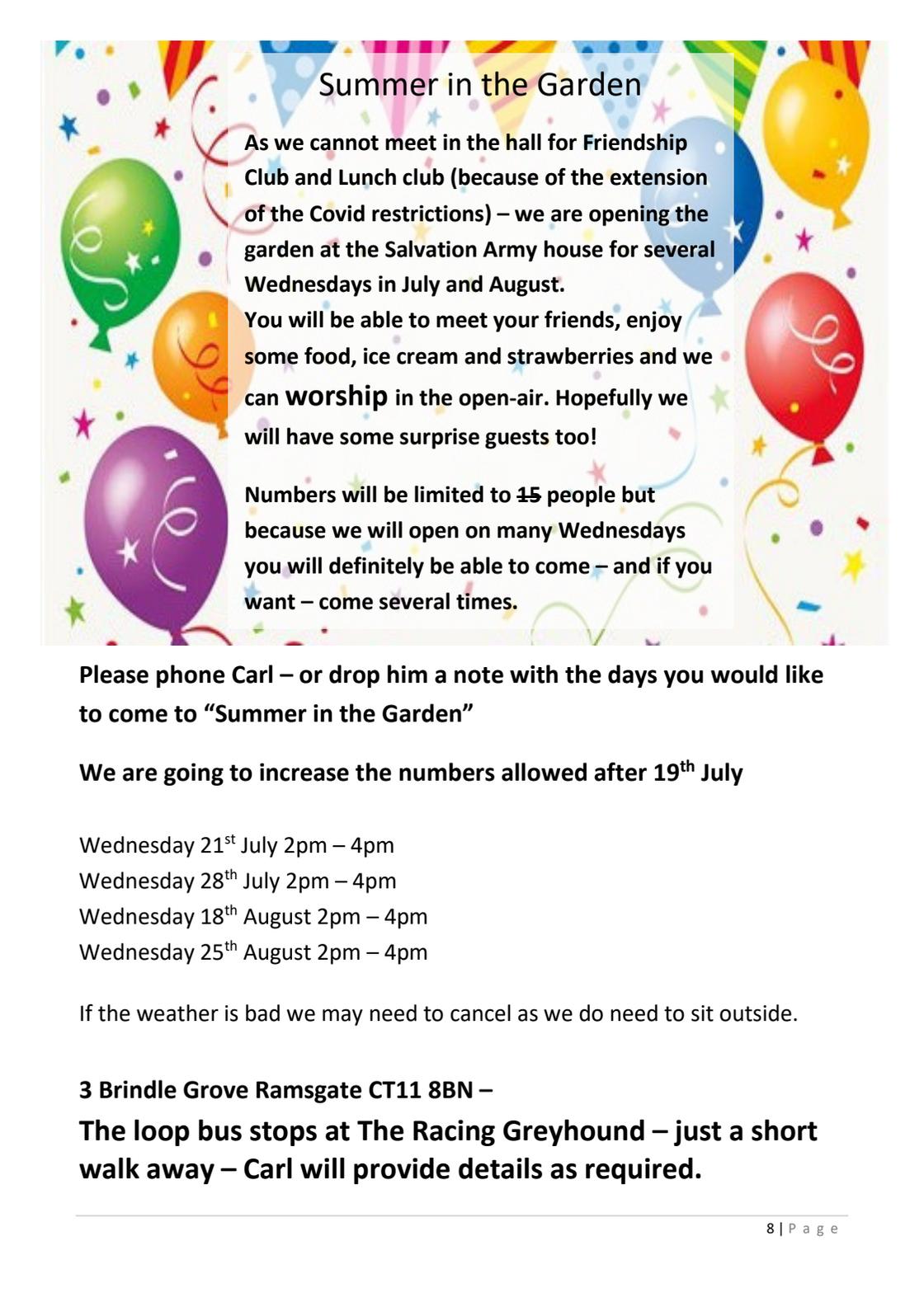
I have a justgiving page which is

www.justgiving.com/greathospitalhike2021-stevecatlin

Even if you only donate 1 pound to support the King's Liver Unit and myself, I would be so grateful. My sincere thanks to you all. Steve

(Carl adds – if giving over the internet is something you would prefer not to do then please pass your gift to me (in a marked envelope “Steve’s fund raising”) and we will send the gift on your behalf)





Summer in the Garden

As we cannot meet in the hall for Friendship Club and Lunch club (because of the extension of the Covid restrictions) – we are opening the garden at the Salvation Army house for several Wednesdays in July and August.

You will be able to meet your friends, enjoy some food, ice cream and strawberries and we can **worship** in the open-air. Hopefully we will have some surprise guests too!

Numbers will be limited to 15 people but because we will open on many Wednesdays you will definitely be able to come – and if you want – come several times.

Please phone Carl – or drop him a note with the days you would like to come to “Summer in the Garden”

We are going to increase the numbers allowed after 19th July

Wednesday 21st July 2pm – 4pm

Wednesday 28th July 2pm – 4pm

Wednesday 18th August 2pm – 4pm

Wednesday 25th August 2pm – 4pm

If the weather is bad we may need to cancel as we do need to sit outside.

3 Brindle Grove Ramsgate CT11 8BN –

The loop bus stops at The Racing Greyhound – just a short walk away – Carl will provide details as required.

Thoughts from Major John

Reverence for life.

I remember many years ago reading about the life of Albert Schweitzer and being amazed at his brilliance and moved by his humanity. His whole philosophy was summed up in his phrase 'Reverence for Life'.

In an introduction to a book of Schweitzer's writings the compiler writes, 'Rarely has any man excelled in so many branches of learning and spent his days in such unselfish service. Eminent as a philosopher, theologian, musician, and physician, Albert Schweitzer considered the relief of suffering the main purpose of his life, and the hospital he founded and maintained for so many years on the edge of an African forest will be his chief memorial.'

Eddie Albert who met Schweitzer wrote...

'One of the deeply important events of my life was meeting Albert Schweitzer at Lambarene. (the site of his hospital in Gabon) I spent days and evenings with him and was moved at finding that his phrase 'reverence for life', was not just words he put together well, but was in fact, a concept which illumined every minute of his day and night. He respected the little stream of ants that travelled across the papers on his desk, and he considered a garden a miracle.'

In his 'Memoirs of Childhood and Youth', Schweitzer wrote....

'It was unreasonable to me – this was even before I had gone to school – that in my evening devotions I should pray only for people. So when my mother had prayed and kissed me goodnight, I used secretly to add another prayer which I had composed for all living creatures. It ran like this:

O Heavenly Father,
Protect and bless all things that have breath:
Guard them from all evil and let them sleep in peace.

Time to Smile

A nurse had become disenchanted with her place of work, and she handed in her notice. Since there was a shortage of nurses in the area she did not think she would have any problem finding another position. She e-mailed cover letters to dozens of potential employers, attaching her CV to each letter. Three weeks later she was disappointed that she had not received even one invitation for a job interview. Finally she received a message that explained why she had not heard from anyone else. It read: 'Your CV was not attached as stated. I do, however, thank you for the vegetable lasagne recipe.'

A coachload of tourists drove through Wiltshire, the guide was pointing out places of interest. When they approached Stonehenge the guide announced: 'This is Stonehenge, a megalithic monument dating from 2800 BC. It consisted originally of thirty upright stones, their tops linked by lintel stones to form a continuous circle about 100 ft across. Each upright weighs around twenty six tons. One tourist turned to his wife and said: 'Pretty impressive, yes?' 'Yes' she agreed. 'But wouldn't you think they'd have built it further back from the main road?'

Quiz

The city of Philadelphia was founded by which religious group?

Which is further north, Blackburn or Blackpool?

Which flower is on the badge of the Boy Scouts?

Which word links a pastime, a small horse and a small falcon?

Which motor racing team and sports car manufacturer is named after the sacred flower of India?

On the Map

The Bass strait divides which two Islands?

Where is the official country home of US Presidents?

The Fens were formerly a bay of which sea?

Which river cuts through the Grand Canyon?

The site of ancient Babylon is now in which country?

Anagram. STASHING is an anagram of which famous battle?

Anagram. STASHING is an anagram of HASTINGS
1.Tasmania and Australia 2.Camp David 3.North Sea 4.Colorado 5.Iraq
On the Map
1.Quakers 2.Blackpool 3.Fleur de Lis 4.Hobby 5.Lotus



Credo: **What makes the good news**, Chief Rabbi
Professor Jonathan Sacks London Times: January
1999

Once I tried the following experiment. I showed an audience a sheet of paper at the centre of which was a blue dot and asked them to tell me what they saw. With only one exception they replied, "A blue dot". I then pointed out that the dot took up less

than one per cent of what they were looking at. They had missed, discounted or ignored the white sheet of paper that gave the blue dot its place. As soon as they realised this, we began to understand together why the media so often present a distorted view of the world - why bad news is news, while good news rarely is.

The information that surrounds us daily is all too often a litany of disasters - wars, famines, crashes, crimes, terrorist incidents, public figures suspected of wrongdoing, the clash of politicians, fears about the future. Pleas like that of the broadcaster Martyn Lewis for more balanced reporting tend to fall on stony ground. Those who argue for more good news are often accused of being naïve or sentimental, of wanting to whitewash over the pain, suffering and corruption that prevails in so many parts of the world. One journalist I know defines news as "something that someone wants to keep out of the papers." Are they right? Is the world really as bad as it seems?

The simple explanation is that news is like the blue spot on white paper. If the paper were blue, we wouldn't even see it. Bad news is news precisely because so much of life is good. Lawbreaking is noteworthy only because the vast majority of people are law-abiding. Corruption hits the headlines only in countries where honesty is the norm. Family breakdown is worth reporting for the simple reason that most people continue to aspire to lifelong marriage as an ideal. What catches our attention is the odd, the discrepant, the out-of-place. Our senses are predisposed to notice movement, not the things that stay solidly in place. The very fact that bad things are newsworthy is the most telling evidence of the fundamental goodness of our world.

This, for me, is the power and necessity of prayer. There are prayers in which we ask for things. But much of world's liturgy asks for nothing. It gives thanks for what we are and what there is. Such prayer is more than the expression of a mood, a temporary elation. It is part of sanity itself. Prayers of thanksgiving "foreground" what is usually in the background. They are acts of focused attention on the white paper without which we would not notice the blue dot. They remind us that without the dominance of kindness we would be indifferent to cruelty. Without faithfulness we would be unmoved by betrayal. Around us everywhere, flooding us with its light, is the sheer dazzling goodness of creation - order instead of chaos, diversity not monotony, the brilliant colours and intricacy of the natural world and the hundred acts of human grace for every one of gracelessness.

The majesty of faith is that it teaches us to see what exists, not merely what catches our attention. As animals, we are genetically programmed to see danger, risk, movement, threat. Without this we would not survive. But the very existence of thanksgiving tells us that we are more than just animals. We are capable of seeing reality whole, the landscape of beauty that forms the backdrop against which we notice the ugly or the cruel. Prayer, not the press, is what makes the good news, news.

Worship on Sunday 11th July

Empowered Church week 5

Glorious God, we come together as your people.
We come as a praising people, singing your goodness;
we come as a hungry people, longing to be fed;
we come as a praying people, bringing our needs, our joys;
we come as a journeying people, looking for direction.

In this hour of worship,
empower us for faithful living.

We pray this in the name of our Saviour, Jesus Christ,
Amen.

Song Number 279

To God be the glory, great things he hath done!
So loved he the world that he gave us his Son;
Who yielded his life an atonement for sin,
And opened the life gate that all may go in.

Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord!

Let the earth hear his voice!

Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord!

Let the people rejoice!

*O come to the Father through Jesus the Son,
And give him the glory; great things he hath done!*

**(After last chorus)*

Great things he hath done!

2 O perfect redemption, the purchase of blood!
To every believer the promise of God;
The vilest offender who truly believes,
That moment from Jesus a pardon receives.

3 Great things he hath taught us, great things he hath done,
And great our rejoicing through Jesus the Son;
But purer and higher and greater will be

Our wonder, our rapture, when Jesus we see.
Fanny Crosby (1820-1915)

Salvation Army Social Wing.

GOOD NEWS
FOR THE
POOR of the EAST END.

NOW OPEN
OLD BANK, GREEN STREET,
BETHNAL GREEN, E.,
AS A
CHEAP FOOD DEPOT AND MEN'S HOME.

Comfortable BEDS (Spring Mattresses) 4d. & 6d. per night
 or 2s. & 3s. per week. Splendid accommodation! Baths,
 Washhouses, Lavatories, Reading and Drying Rooms, &c.

Good Food at **P** **POOR**
PEOPLE'S
RICES.
 READ! READ!! READ!!!

FOR A CHILD.

SOUP, per basin	1d.	COFFEE or COCOA, per cup ...	1d.
" with bread	1d.	With Bread and Jam	1d.

GOOD WORKMEN'S DINNERS, from 3d. Try them.

FOR ADULTS.

SOUP, per basin	1d.
" with bread	1d.
POTATOES	1d.
CABBAGE	1d.
HARICOT BEANS	1d.
BOILED JAM PUDDING	1d.
" PLUM " each	1d.
RICE " " each	1d.
BAKED PLUM " " each	1d.
JAM ROLL	1d.

We know well that William and Catherine Booth understood the misery that gambling, smoking, drinking alcohol and taking drugs had upon the poor that they were trying to lead to faith.

They knew that transformation of the soul had to be matched with changed life styles. Their Victorian desire for disciple within this new movement gave little

room for dissension. You were in or out. Interestingly one matter of life style that was dear to both William and Catherine – and was championed by Bramwell was

vegetarianism. Even before they married William and Catherine were writing to each other to make sure they both felt the same. Listen to the summary (the original article runs to many pages) of the reasons Bramwell gives for following a vegetarian diet

Eat like a Christian

I have been a strict vegetarian for 10 years and know the good it has done me

The bible (Genesis 1:29) says we should be vegetarian

Eating vegetable keeps one pure and controls dangerous passions

Vegetables make you strong and vigorous

Vegetables are ¼ cheaper than meat, the poor will have more money to spend

The money saved can be used for Kingdom work

Producing meat is wasteful. 10lbs of vegetables make only 1lb of meat

Eating meat makes you sleepy, fat and lazy

Eating vegetables makes you healthy and happy

The body was not made to eat meat and because of this we develop many illnesses

Meat spoils easily and much is wasted in hot countries

Much meat is diseased

Meat causes cancer

Meat causes eczema, constipation, piles, worms, dysentery, severe headaches and the like.

Animals are treated cruelly; travelling long distances by ship and rail and road to the slaughter houses of the world. God disapproves of all cruelty—whether to man or beast.

The whole business of killing is cruel, even when it is done with care, and we know that in the case of millions of creatures it is done with very little care.

The occupation of slaughtering animals is brutalising to those who are required to do the work.

I believe this matter is well worthy of the serious consideration of Salvation Army officers It has an important bearing not only upon their own health and happiness, but upon their influence among the people, as men and women who are free from the bondage of that selfish gratification which too often afflicts the professed servants of Christ. Let us remember the Apostle's direction: "Whether ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God."

Think on these things!

Bramwell Booth

So it's a wonder that "eating like a Christian" was not a requirement. To be a Salvationist it is no beer, no spirits, no tobacco, no sausages!

But really its not so strange – just look at the food laws that the Jews have followed for thousands of years.

Jews are forbidden to eat carnivores; animals that do not chew the cud (e.g., the pig); animals that do not have cloven hooves (e.g., the camel, the hare, the horse and the hyrax); bats, birds of prey; scavengers reptiles and amphibians, all non-fish and only those with fins and scales and no insects except special types of locust.

Muslim food law is very similar, Hindus will not eat cows, and most Buddhists and Sikhs are vegetarian.

In fact more than half of the world's population eat no meat.

Who knows maybe the Salvation Army could have been a meat free church!

So, lets listen to the next part of our look at the empowered church. This happened directly after the healing of Dorcas. Peter is staying with Simon the tanner

Acts 10 Cornelius Calls for Peter

10 At Caesarea there was a man named Cornelius, a centurion in what was known as the Italian Regiment. 2 He and all his family were devout and God-fearing; he gave generously to those in need and prayed to God regularly. 3 One day at about three in the afternoon he had a vision. He distinctly saw an angel of God, who came to him and said, "Cornelius!"

4 Cornelius stared at him in fear. "What is it, Lord?" he asked. The angel answered, "Your prayers and gifts to the poor have come up as a memorial offering before God. 5 Now send men to Joppa to bring back a man named Simon who is called Peter. 6 He is staying with Simon the tanner, whose house is by the sea." 7 When the angel who spoke to him had gone, Cornelius called two of his servants and a devout soldier who was one of his attendants. 8 He told them everything that had happened and sent them to Joppa.

Peter's Vision

9 About noon the following day as they were on their journey and approaching the city, Peter went up on the roof to pray. 10 He became hungry and wanted something to eat, and while the meal was being prepared, he fell into a trance. 11 He saw heaven opened and something like a large sheet being let down to earth by its four corners. 12 It contained all kinds of four-footed animals, as well as reptiles and birds. 13 Then a voice told him, "Get up, Peter. Kill and eat."

14 "Surely not, Lord!" Peter replied. "I have never eaten anything impure or unclean."

15 The voice spoke to him a second time, "Do not call anything impure that God has made clean."

16 This happened three times, and immediately the sheet was taken back to heaven.

17 While Peter was wondering about the meaning of the vision, the men sent by Cornelius found out where Simon's house was and stopped at the gate. 18 They called out, asking if Simon who was known as Peter was staying there.

19 While Peter was still thinking about the vision, the Spirit said to him, "Simon, three[a] men are looking for you. 20 So get up and go downstairs. Do not hesitate to go with them, for I have sent them."

21 Peter went down and said to the men, "I'm the one you're looking for. Why have you come?"

22 The men replied, "We have come from Cornelius the centurion. He is a righteous and God-fearing man, who is respected by all the Jewish people. A holy angel told him to ask you to come to his house so that he could hear what you have to say." 23 Then Peter invited the men into the house to be his guests.

Peter at Cornelius's House

The next day Peter started out with them, and some of the believers from Joppa went along. 24 The following day he arrived in Caesarea. Cornelius was expecting them and had called together his relatives and close friends. 25 As Peter entered the house, Cornelius met him and fell at his feet in reverence. 26 But Peter made him get up. "Stand up," he said, "I am only a man myself."

27 While talking with him, Peter went inside and found a large gathering of people. 28 He said to them: "You are well aware that it is against our law for a Jew to associate with or visit a Gentile. But God has shown me that I should not call anyone impure or unclean. 29 So when I was sent for, I came without raising any objection. May I ask why you sent for me?"

30 Cornelius answered: "Three days ago I was in my house praying at this hour, at three in the afternoon. Suddenly a man in shining clothes stood before me 31 and said, 'Cornelius, God has heard your prayer and remembered your gifts to the poor. 32 Send to Joppa for Simon who is called Peter. He is a guest in the home of Simon the tanner, who lives by the sea.' 33 So I sent for you immediately, and it was good of you to come. Now we are all here in the presence of God to listen to everything the Lord has commanded you to tell us."

34 Then Peter began to speak: "I now realize how true it is that God does not show favouritism 35 but accepts from every nation the one who fears him and does what is right. 36 You know the message God sent to the people of Israel, announcing the good news of peace through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all. 37 You

know what has happened throughout the province of Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John preached— 38 how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him. 39 “We are witnesses of everything he did in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They killed him by hanging him on a cross, 40 but God raised him from the dead on the third day and caused him to be seen. 41 He was not seen by all the people, but by witnesses whom God had already chosen—by us who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. 42 He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one whom God appointed as judge of the living and the dead. 43 All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.” 44 While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit came on all who heard the message. 45 The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astonished that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on Gentiles. 46 For they heard them speaking in tongues[b] and praising God. Then Peter said, 47 “Surely no one can stand in the way of their being baptized with water. They have received the Holy Spirit just as we have.” 48 So he ordered that they be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked Peter to stay with them for a few days.

Befriended, befriended by the King above all Kings
Surrendered, surrendered to a friend above all friends
Invited, invited deep into this mystery
Delighted, delighted by the wonders I have seen

Sing

This will be my story
This will be my song
You'll always be my saviour.
Jesus You will always have my heart

Astounded, astounded that Your gospel beckoned me
Surrounded, surrounded but I've never been so free,
Determined, determined now to live this life for You
You're so worthy my greatest gift would be the least You're due

This will be my story
This will be my song
You'll always be my Saviour.
Jesus You will always have my heart

Matt Redman

So you see why I started as I did. Peter holds the same revulsion at eating the wrong food as the founders. In the vision he is arguing with God – you don't argue with God. Just don't But Peter knows that God does not change and he genuinely cannot understand why he should now be eating lizard sandwiches and snail soup.

To break the law – and the Jewish Christians were still following the laws that embodied their culture and customs – to break the law has serious consequences. Punishments ranged from flogging to being placed in a cell by the synagogue – a bit like the stocks – where passers by could spit in your face. But most frighteningly was what you would face at judgement. No wonder Peter argued.

Remember last week we explained that Luke only had room for the most important events in the life of the early church. So how valuable is this?

It is totally essential. Some have called it the Pentecost for the Gentiles. But we will see why later. For now let be clear on where we are going with this

The empowered church sees.

But at the moment Peter did not!

Song Number 1007

Let there be love shared among us,
Let there be love in our eyes;
May now your love sweep this nation,
Cause us, O Lord, to arise.
Give us a fresh understanding
Of brotherly love that is real;
Let there be love shared among us,
Let there be love.

Dave Bilbrough

What can we see?

The first thing to see is the man called Cornelius. We know he is important, leading a revered regiment of 100 men. He was not Jewish but was following Jesus – he loved God and gave generously to the poor.

Now what we see here is a non Jewish follower of Jesus – he is automatically second class. Peter says later on when he meets him, “you know that I am not allowed to meet or associate with you a Gentile.” And Cornelius would be well aware of this. He was not welcome because he had not converted to Judaism. Can you see already what is odd here? It says that God has seen all the good in Cornelius – but because he has not conformed to Jewish ritual the early Christian church do not.

So God provides Cornelius this vision and is told to get some of his men to bring Peter to his house. Can you see an interesting difference already. Peter and Cornelius are both told in visions to do something that can't be right. Cornelius obeys. Peter argues!

See what happens next. Its nearly lunch time, it's a hot day and Peter hungry and ready to eat falls into a sleep and has his vision from God. Before his eyes he sees a sheet descend with a variety of animals that Jewish law forbid him to eat.

Get up, kill, eat.

As we said earlier, Peter objects, he argues and makes very clear how good he is as a Jew. "I have never eaten anything impure and unclean."

For those in gathered worship I will stop at this point and open the floor to discussion.

Who thinks this is about meat eating?

Is this a message from God telling us that everything is now "fair game" (excuse the pun) In a way that is how we have separated from the other Theistic religions. There are some people who will eat anything – and did you know there have been TV programmes on road kill – scraping up hedgehogs and pigeons off the road and eating them (well after cooking of course) and many cookery books. We are not bound by any of the rules of the Old Testament – we pretty much eat anything.

Actually lets ask – what is the most strange meat you have ever eaten?

Does this give us permission? God says don't you tell me what is right and wrong. I have made these pure – so you can eat them.

Well I'm not sure how our discussion will go but it is clear that is actually what Peter thought God was telling him.

Peter breakfast is transformed, sausages, bacon, black pudding....and just wait for lunch....

The next song is a favourite of mine and just sets the scene perfectly. What happens next for Peter is that someone foreign – someone from another place comes and knocks on the door and escorts him to meet with Cornelius -

Song Number 1011

They shall come from the east, they shall come from the west,
And sit down in the Kingdom of God;
Both the rich and the poor, the despised, the distressed,

They'll sit down in the Kingdom of God.
And none will ask what they have been
Provided that their robes are clean;
They shall come from the east, they shall come from the west,
And sit down in the Kingdom of God.

2 They shall come from the east, they shall come from the west,
And sit down in the Kingdom of God;
To be met by their Father and welcomed and blessed,
And sit down in the Kingdom of God.
The black, the white, the dark, the fair,
Your colour will not matter there;
They shall come from the east, they shall come from the west,
And sit down in the Kingdom of God.

3 They shall come from the east, they shall come from the west,
And sit down in the Kingdom of God;
Out of great tribulation to triumph and rest
They'll sit down in the Kingdom of God.
From every tribe and every race,
All men as brothers shall embrace;
They shall come from the east, they shall come from the west,
And sit down in the Kingdom of God.
John Gowans (1934-2012)

Caesarea is 50 miles from Joppa and the next day Peter here
with the three men to the house of Cornelius.

What you need to see here is that Peter is still trying to work out
what the vision means.

When does he realise that the sheet vision wasn't about meat
eating.

The sheet was about Grace – can we see that?

What do you think God would show you in a sheet?

Again in gathered worship – after we sing this next song we are going to think about the taboos of our age. Who or what are the no-go areas for us

There's a wideness in God's mercy,
like the wideness of the sea.
There's a kindness in God's justice,
which is more than liberty.

There is welcome for the sinner,
and more graces for the good.
There is mercy with the Saviour,
there is healing in his blood.

But we make God's love too narrow
by false limits of our own,
and we magnify its strictness
with a zeal God will not own.

For the love of God is broader
than the measures of the mind,
and the heart of the Eternal
is most wonderfully kind.

If our love were but more simple,
we should rest upon God's word,
and our lives would be illumined
by the presence of our Lord.

Frederick William Faber (1814-1863)

Who or what could God show you that you would say "surely not Lord"

For Peter it was a gentile
Was that because he was a different race

Or was it because he wasn't doing religion in the way Peter thought it should be done.

Can you see who your "surely not Lord" might be.

It maybe different a race, a different class, a different accent.

They are maybe a bit obvious. What about the hidden differences. We really don't want people like that to be in our Corps. They don't belong here!

I don't want to put words into your mind – I hope you know.

I certainly know of people and personalities that push my buttons and I pray often that God would break my heart and help me to love as he loves.

Sing

My faithful Father, enduring friend
Your tender mercy's like a river with no end
It overwhelms me, covers my sin
Each time I come into your presence I stand in wonder once again

Your grace still amazes me
Your love is still a mystery
Each day I fall on my knees
'Cause Your grace still amazes me
Your grace still amazes me

O patient Saviour, You make me whole
You are the author and the healer of my soul
What can I give You, Lord what can I say
I know there's no way to repay You only to offer You my praise

Your grace still amazes me
Your love is still a mystery
Each day I fall on my knees

'Cause Your grace still amazes me
Your grace still amazes me

It's deeper, it's wider, it's stronger, it's higher
Than anything my eyes can see
Connie Harrington / Shawn Craig
Dear Father in Heaven,

You desire for us to be family to one another, not because we are so lovable and endearing, or because we choose to be with people who are like ourselves, but because you want us, as your children, to reach out with the best for other people, whoever they are and whatever they are like. You want all people to enjoy love and joy, peace and patience, kindness and goodness. Thank you, Father for making us your children and help us to befriend and welcome one another as we are all your family.

We ask that by the power you of the Holy Spirit, you will fill and transform us so that we grow like you in our loving concern for other people. Strengthen our faith so that you live in us and we live to please you, rather than trying to please the world or ourselves. Make your priorities ours, so we do not follow the greedy and selfish priorities of our society.

Give wisdom to those who govern us so that all the people in our country can live in peace and safety. Inspire the leaders of the Christian churches so that Jesus is honoured among all sectors of society.

We marvel how your Spirit takes Jesus to the outsiders, those who belong to marginalised or rejected groups in our society. May we welcome them as one with us. Bless the places where your word and love is shared especially when shared with:

- those who are often not accepted as equals in our society,
- those who don't know you,
- those who don't want to know you,
- those whom no one wants to get involved with

Give us more of your love, O Father, make us more like you.

Empower us to share your love with all we meet,
In the loving name of Jesus,
Amen

Father,

Thank you for loving and accepting me today. I choose to honour You with my attitude, words and actions. Holy Spirit, show me how to live as an example of Your goodness all the days of my life. Thank You for freedom for all in Jesus' name!

Amen.

What have you seen? What has God revealed to you?

I pray that your "surely not Lord" will turn to

I realise now how true it is that God does not show favouritism.

As we wrap this up let's meditate with this powerful song

Song Number 463

I have no claim on grace;
I have no right to plead;
I stand before my maker's face
Condemned in thought and deed.
But since there died a Lamb
Who, guiltless, my guilt bore,
I lay fast hold on Jesus' name,
And sin is mine no more.

2 From whence my soul's distress
But from the hold of sin?
And whence my hope of righteousness
But from thy grace within?
I speak to thee my need
And tell my true complaint;

Thou only canst convert indeed
A sinner to a saint.

3 O pardon-speaking blood!
O soul-renewing grace!
Through Christ I know the love of God
And see the Father's face.
I now set forth thy praise,
Thy loyal servant I,
And gladly dedicate my days
My God to glorify.
Albert Orsborn (1886-1967)

The narrative ends with this amazing scene of the Holy Spirit coming upon all who had received the Gospel message from Peter. It says that they spoke in tongue – glorifying God and the Jewish Christians who saw it were astonished.

Peter said surely no one can stand in the way of them being accepted now as believers.

They are in the family.

I would love to see such things happen

As an empowered church we must pray that transformation will come among those who come to us so desperately seeking hope.

You know they come with their past lives, their hurt, their addiction. Their behaviour makes it hard for us to love unconditionally

Are we really any different? - frankly isn't that just we have all sung

I have no claim on grace;
I have no right to plead;
I stand before my maker's face
Condemned in thought and deed.

Its is only grace that changes us.

The eyes of an empowered church.

Seeing Jesus in everyone.

May we never think or hear ourselves say

“surely not Lord”

Song Number 917

Christ for the world, we sing;
The world to Christ we bring
With loving zeal;
The poor and those who mourn,
The faint and overborne,
Sin-sick and sorrow-worn,
Whom Christ doth heal.

2 Christ for the world, we sing;
The world to Christ we bring
With fervent prayer;
The wayward and the lost
By restless passions tossed,
Redeemed at countless cost
From dark despair.

4 Christ for the world, we sing;
The world to Christ we bring
With one accord;
With us the work to share,
With us reproach to dare,
With us the cross to bear,
For Christ our Lord.

Samuel Wolcott (1813-1886)

Benediction

Go into your week
knowing you are loved perfectly,
saved eternally,
and empowered as a disciple of Jesus
to share God's love with everyone you meet.



Peter and Cornelius

S E V I T A L E R K S R E Y A R P
E V S M B J I M C L E A N L F C R
C B J H I N T T X Y Q E F H E W J
I Q H E R O U I F V M Q A N T O D
O T L A D R O F M O K N T Z P I A
V E X V S E V S Q U Z U K P V D E
T E C E D T E J U A R O A L B A R
I H Z N P E D W O I N Y E R V S A
R S Q L U P K N O P L I Q F F U S
I L V J R Q L N D Z J E M U B S E
P Y I B A P T I Z E D F N A E E A
S R S L E G N A S A H G D R L J C
Y G I I W C O H S I W E J O O S V
L N O P D O L E R U P M I N G C P
O U N R O O F W R E P T I L E S Z
H H L N S E L I T N E G P T O C R
K N F O U R F O O T E D P A K T U

angel

birds

clean

four-footed

heaven

impure

Joppa

relatives

sheet

animals

Caesarea

Cornelius

Gentiles

Holy Spirit

Jesus

Peter

reptiles

vision

baptized

centurion

devout

God

hungry

Jewish

prayers

roof

voice



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