



Newcastle City Temple Connected

Reimagining Church Together

Dear Friends

Last Tuesday was Shrove Tuesday and it seemed to me that the media became flooded with instructions on how to make the perfect Pancake, with each recipe varying slightly in the specific amounts of each basic ingredient required.

BBC breakfast news went with the 1-2-3 recipe; 100g of plain flour, 2 Eggs and 300g of milk; whilst over on ITV 'This Morning's' chef Phil Vickery said that what was needed was 100g plain flour, 2 medium eggs and approximately 200ml milk.

Jamie Oliver's claim to the perfect pancake - offers a super easy, super quick recipe and calls for equal measurements of three basic ingredients; it's the 1-1-1 method.

1 heaped mug of self-raising flour (approx 250g)
1 mug of semi-skimmed milk (approx 230ml)
1 large free-range egg

Whilst Mary Berry, former judge on the Great British Bake Off, states in her recipe the need for 125g plain flour, 1 whole egg and 1 yolk, and 300ml milk

(Dare I confess that the ready made packet of sweet pancakes which I picked up in Iceland, satisfied my Pancake craving this week!)

When it comes to basic recipes, such as pancakes, I guess that some of you will follow a 'tried and tested' recipe which has been handed down through your family - much like the family Christmas Cake recipe or hearty stew recipe,

...And I wonder what other family traditions we might have inherited.

I'm reminded of this story;

A family was gathered together for a special family meal. The youngest newly married daughter was just about to put the huge piece of brisket into the oven when her mother stopped her and said; 'Don't forget to cut an inch off each end before you roast it.

Puzzled, the daughter asked her mother "why?" - "Because that's the way my mother taught me to do", said the mother.

Still puzzled, the daughter went to find her grandmother. "Nana," she asked, "Mum says you have to cut an inch off each end off the brisket before putting it in the oven to roast. Why is this?" "Well, that's how my mother taught me to do it", said grandma— "and it's the way I've always done it". The daughter's husband had heard all of this and he wanted to get to the bottom of the mystery. He went into the living room where the family was gathered around great grandmother. "Nona," he asked, "Grandma says you taught her to cut an inch off each end of the brisket before putting it in the oven to roast.. I'm puzzled. Why is this necessary?"

The great grandmother, paused for a moment, then let out a slight chuckle— "Well, dear, all I can think is that when I was a young mother, and was preparing my first large family dinner, the piece of brisket I had purchased was 18 inches long, but the largest roasting pan I had was only 16 inches, so I had to cut an inch off each end to make the brisket fit the pan."

And so it goes, from generation to generation, until someone asks "Why?"



I wonder how many people throughout the UK made and ate pancakes on Tuesday - without understanding the reason why?

I wonder how many people throughout the UK will have taken a decision to 'give something up' - be it Chocolate, Caffeine, Social Media etc.— without understanding why?

It's so easy to act on tradition without questioning why we do what we do. It's not my intention to go into great detail here about the origins of Shrove Tuesday & Lent - but in essence Shrove Tuesday gets its name from the word 'shrive', which means to give absolution after hearing confession. Shrove Tuesday, traditionally, was the day people went to confession in an effort to prepare themselves for Lent; that period of six weeks (40 days not including Sundays) leading up to Easter, which rightly many consider to be the most important festival in the Christian calendar. Lent is characterized by self-denial and self-discipline with people giving things up (traditional foods such as meat, fish, fats and dairy) that they might identify more fully with Jesus who fasted and prayed in the Wilderness - at the commencement of His earthly ministry; and we can read about this and how he was tempted by the devil in the gospels (Matt. 4:1-11; Mark 1:12,13; Luke 4:1-13).

Within our Housegroup study 'From a Ram to a Lamb' we have been looking at the Old Testament tradition and understanding of Covenant & Sacrifice, we've considered how this relates to the New Covenant and the 'Once for All' sacrifice established through Christ Jesus in the New Testament; we've been encouraged to ask how this relates to our lives today - and what the implications are for us.

It's important to ask questions - and I encourage you to use this period of Self-Denial, this Lenten season to do precisely that; to question the depth of your personal relationship with God and your understanding of His purpose for your life.

When it comes to corps life - when a newly appointed Officer asks why the corps acts in a certain way - sometimes the response is 'Because that's the way we've always done it'. Whilst I'm all for building on the heritage of the past, we should always guard against allowing the past to define us in such a way that it inhibits growth. With the advent of Covid - we have all be forced to do things differently over the past 11 months; as we move towards an easing of some of the restrictions and the hope of being able to worship collectively at Brunswick once again... and look forward to 'eventual' opening of our new hall (whenever that might be!); I pray that we will be bold enough to ask if there is anything which we need to give up / leave behind, and If there is anything we need to do differently. To listen to God with open hearts that we may truly discern His will. I'd encourage you this week to take some time to check out these scriptures which can help us to discern and hear the voice of God more clearly;

- Jeremiah 29:13, Romans 10:17, Luke 6:46, John 10:27, Romans 12:2, 1 Kings 19:11-12

... and then make verse 2 of Song 613 (O Jesus I have promised) your prayer

*Oh, let me hear Thee speaking, In accents clear and still,
Above the storms of passion, The murmurs of self-will;
Oh, speak to reassure me, To hasten, or control;
Oh, speak, and make me listen, Thou Guardian of my soul.*

On the question of the of How?, Why? & What? Can I also encourage you to listen again to the popular band composition 'Prelude on the Hymn Tune 'Lavenham'' by Geoffrey Nobes, the setting for a Hymn written by Nick Fawcett 'Lord there are times when I ask'.

https://youtu.be/FucosPUF_Kc

With every blessing
Major Liz

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Reimagining Church - Let's Worship Together



SUNDAY: 21st February 2021

Theme: LOVE BEYOND - Fear

Key Text: 1 John 4:17-18

This week we continue with the theme 'Love Beyond' the theme which has been given to us by Territorial Headquarters for this period of Self Denial.

Let's start with prayer...

Father God, we praise you for the wonderful future that you have prepared for us through the death and resurrection of your Son, Jesus Christ. We eagerly await the day when we will enter into your presence for all eternity. Please help us to not lose heart when we face the many pressures, anxieties and troubles of life in this fallen world. Amen. (Based on 2 Corinthians 5)

Meditation

1 John 4:17-18 helps us to understand the relationship between love and fear.

¹⁷This is how love is made complete among us so that we will have confidence on the day of judgment: In this world we are like Jesus. ¹⁸There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love.

John Piper says; 'Verse 17 tells us how to have something everybody wants to have. And verse 18 tells us how to get rid of something everybody wants to get rid of'.

The thing everybody wants is LOVE. Poets write about it, Singers sing about it and in this messy world of ours, love is one of the most crucial things we can give.

The thing everybody wants rid of is FEAR. - Scripture tells us that as we live in God, our love grows more perfect, so that we will not be afraid. Why? Well, because love, perfect love - love which comes from God, through Christ alone, drives out fear.

John suggests through verse 18, If we are fearful, it's because we have not fully experienced His perfect love.

And so, the main point of the text is clear: John wants to help us enjoy confidence before God, and not be paralyzed or depressed by fear.

So what are you afraid of... I think throughout this pandemic we have witnessed the immense outpouring of love to others, as people have expressed their appreciation to others and have reached out to others with acts of kindness. But we have also witnessed immense fear too. Fear in the eyes of those struggling through this terrible illness, fear in the eyes of those caring for those who are suffering, fear in the eyes of those who are concerned for loved ones, fear in the eyes of those facing loneliness and isolation, fear in the eyes of those concerned for their future in terms of health, employment and education.

Aside from this current pandemic; for many people, worry, anxiety and fear are constant companions – fear of death, fear of danger, fear of disease, fear of rejection, fear of criticism. And, too often, these fears are crippling, keeping us from the life God has called us to live. But it doesn't have to be that way. As Christians, we have been given all we need in order to face even the most frightening, unexpected and overwhelming obstacles in life. As we live in God, our love grows more perfect. As we live in God, we understand and accept more of God's truth and love in our lives.

Scripture tells us that we are created in God's image. We are the objects of His love and grace, We are uniquely formed, forgiven, free, justified, redeemed, adopted into His family ... and the list of His promises goes on and on.

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Continued...



As we increasingly and consistently live in God, these promises take effect and the result is that our love grows more perfect. Unlike magnets where opposite forces attract, fear is repelled (driven out) by love. Love always wins! Because GOD is LOVE and there is no force in heaven or earth more powerful than He. Therefore, as we live in God, our love grows more perfect and we will not be afraid because love drives out all fear.

*'Love lifted me, love lifted me,
When no one but Christ could help,
Love lifted me.
Love lifted me, love lifted me,
When no one but Christ could help,
Love lifted me.'*

A Prayer

THERE IS NO FEAR IN LOVE (1 John 4:18)

Heavenly Father, I pray that I would let these sweet words of truth settle in my heart. There are times in my life when I am very fearful. I know that when I am fearing things in life, I am not exhibiting trust in You. I pray that You would surround me in Your perfect love, where fear has no place to stay and has to be cast out. As I rest in Your love, I pray that I would experience the peace the passes understanding, whatever situation of life I am in. And as I come to a deeper realisation of the depth of Your superlative love for me, may I be used by You to love as I am loved. In Jesus' name, AMEN.

Source: <https://dailyverse.knowing-jesus.com/1-john-4-18>

Suggested Songs for this week

Love Lifted me (SASB 853)

God's love to me is wonderful (SASB 25)

Suggested Songster Piece: Love lifted me <https://youtu.be/yZkitzxiLc0>
(not the best recording but a beautiful arrangement of this song by Dean Jones)

This weeks chosen Band Piece: Ochills

BM Bob Dare invited me to choose this weeks Band piece and the piece I have chosen is Ochills (SATB 785). The link below will take you to a beautiful arrangement on the song 'To The Hills' (SASB 554) by Ernest Rance as arranged by Euphonium virtuoso Derick Kane. This piece features soloist Michel Rosenquist, who writes; *'During these worried times in the world it is important to know that we can look up to the hills and know that He is there to help us. That our faith lets us fly above all storms'*.
<https://youtu.be/E9ILG4uZyAs>

This Weeks Activities

Sun 21st Feb 1800 Youth Fellowship via Zoom

Tues 23rd Feb 1100 Weekly Coffee & Chat via Zoom

1900 Major Liz's House Group will meet to study part 3 of *'From the Ram to the Lamb'*

Thurs 25th Feb 1300 Property Steering Group Meeting via Zoom

1900 Bob's House Group will meet to study part 3 of *'From the Ram to the Lamb'*

HAVE A BLESSED WEEK & KEEP SAFE!