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## FRIENDSHIP WITH THE CREATOR LEADS TO A HARVEST

Aristotle, said that while it might be possible to venerate and appease the gods, actual intimate friendship with a god was impossible.

### John 4

**The Creator of the universe sits by a well. He is the Bread and Water of Life and yet He asks the local woman approaching Him for water.** She is amazed that He a Jew and a man is even speaking to her. From the following conversation, we gather that she is very, very thirsty; thirsty for water <sup>(v15)</sup>, thirsty for life, thirsty for love <sup>(v17)</sup> and thirsty for God <sup>(v20)</sup>.

Jesus speaks with the woman as an equal, discussing the theology of prayer, the Father and the Spirit, prophesies of the Messiah, and she said of the **conversation "He told me everything I ever did."** In fact, He revealed to her things that even His disciples wouldn't grasp for another two years, nor did the great teacher Nicodemus about whom we read in the previous chapter.

When His disciples return from buying food from her very village, Jesus refuses their bread, saying **"I have food to eat that you know nothing about."** He was so thrilled with this woman's openness to Him, the gospel and to a new teaching on prayer, that His appetite had left Him. He could see the whole village becoming open to His gospel. It isn't only the Angels that are thrilled to see a person receiving the Water of



Life, and this news is like bread from heaven and satisfies even the Messiah Himself. He tells His disciples they are about to reap a harvest that they didn't sow. While they were getting bread, Jesus was sowing seeds, and now the whole village was on the move.

*40 So when the Samaritans came to him, they urged him to stay with them, and he stayed two days. 41 And because of his words many more became believers. 42 They said to the woman, "We no longer believe just because of what you said; now we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this man really is the Saviour of the world." 43 After the two days he left for Galilee.*

By Andy Wilcock



# ONE YEAR ON



**A journey that started reluctantly at the end of 2019 in prayer. A journey I never expected or wanted. I was very settled and happy in Rushden at The Mission church, but when God speaks so clearly that it is time to move on you have to be obedient and go where He leads.**

I would never have expected to be where we are today and I am so grateful to God. We are settled in our own home in Bedworth, where our journey into ministry began 22 years ago. **God has blessed me with another job as a GP medical secretary in a lovely surgery in Kenilworth, and we are members at Heath End Church in Nuneaton.**

**Ian is working for Flame International and travelling all over the country** heading up the discipleship courses and leading healing days in churches. He will no doubt be going abroad on mission next year. Check out their website [www.flameinternational.org](http://www.flameinternational.org). Flame take the love of Jesus and the healing power of God into countries that have suffered war, terror and genocide and they see God restore people's lives.



But the journey in between the end of 2019 and now has been a hard one and **the only thing that kept me going were the two words that God spoke very clearly to me when I wasn't expecting it, 'Moving out'** with an overwhelming sudden sense of sadness and tears rolling down my face. I didn't realise the importance and strength those words were going to be to me.

I was broken hearted to leave Rushden, our son and grandchildren, our friends, my job, and of course our extended family at The Mission church. It was so hard to voice that final decision at the church meeting at the end of June 2021.

It wasn't a straightforward journey either as God did not reveal to us straight away what we would be moving into, just that we were to move.

Ian had had a vision of a new role in the union, he drafted the job spec and we thought this was going to be it. But in September Jan Ransom the director of Flame International approached Ian with the details of a role they were creating within the charity and wanted Ian to apply for it.

It is very hard to express on



paper and in so few words the full details of the months between September 2021 and January 2022 except to say there was a lot of prayer. We knew at the end of October that Ian had to withdraw his application for the role within the Union and wait to apply for the Flame role which was not advertised until January. Three months in limbo and then there was no guarantee that he would be offered the role. **But we trusted God. He had brought us this far and He knew the plans He had for us, we just needed to continue being obedient and faithful.**

It would have been so easy and comfortable to stay where we were, but having made that sacrifice God has blessed us beyond measure, and we are so grateful for all that He has done in us and through us and still has for us. **Even when we don't understand or even don't prefer what God is calling us to, it is always better to trust Him and follow His leading.**

Sandra Fall



# A Sure Foundation In Turbulent Times - Part 2

Dear Friend

*He will be the sure foundation for your times, a rich store of salvation and wisdom and knowledge; the fear of the LORD is the key to this treasure. Isaiah 33:6 NIV*

Isaiah's powerful statement links the sure foundation of God with three things, each of which apply not just to my ministry and that of Philo Trust, but to all of us who are Christians.

## **First, we have a reliable rescue.**

The gospel is a 'store of salvation'. All around us we see those who need rescuing from lives that are utterly meaningless, from pursuing hopes that deliver nothing and from feeding on desires that are ultimately destructive. **But God does save and the Hebrew word here is closely related to Joshua and the name Jesus - the one who 'will save his people from their sins'** (Matthew 1:21 NIV). In the tumult of our world we can confidently proclaim, 'Jesus can be trusted to save!'

## **Second, we have a rich resource.**

The gospel offers a store of 'wisdom and knowledge'. One of the challenges of our changing times is how we are overwhelmed by an infinity of words and images. But which of them are true? Which of them are helpful? And what, anyway, do we do about them? **We need wisdom and insight, and here God offers us both. God's Word, both in writing as Scripture and in Christ Jesus, informs and instructs us.**

This passage in Isaiah may well be echoed in Colossians 2:3 when Paul writes of Christ, 'in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge' (NIV). In bewildering times, we preach a God who, in

Christ, gives us a truth we can live by.

**Finally, we have a reverent relationship.** We read, 'the fear of the LORD is the key to this treasure'. Today, there are any number of 'religious products' on the market: beliefs, programmes and rituals, idols and illusions. **Yet in the gospel we see a God who can be known personally through Christ. If we come to God in a reverent, humble attitude through Christ we can find in him a saviour for now and for eternity.** In an unfriendly world, the gospel offers the ultimate friend: God himself.

These are changing, challenging times. **Yet we can face them with the certainty of a living God, who in Jesus is our foundation of life, our salvation for life and our direction in life.** It is my prayer and hope that this year Philo Trust and I will continue to boldly and confidently proclaim the Christ who so richly fulfils every aspect of Isaiah's promise. **May that be true of you too!** As we prepare for this new year, would you please prayerfully consider sowing financially into our ministry to seize the many open-doors of opportunity for a 'time such as this'?

Would you please consider becoming a monthly partner or making a one-off donation?

A huge thanks to all of you who sowed into our ministry last year. **The seed you have sown has borne good fruit and there has been 'rejoicing in heaven and on earth'.**

Grace and peace,  
J. John - Revd Canon  
Visit [www.canonjohn.com](http://www.canonjohn.com)

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY



# COLLECTORS CORNER

Owzzat?? ... The enthusiastic, hopeful cry of many a fielding side of cricketers rings out from our T.V. and village greens during the summer cricket season. This month's memorabilia belongs to father and son duo, Simon and Riley Sykes, partly inherited from Simon's grandad, Herbert.

The bats are signed by some famous players either playing for their county team or country team, Geoff Boycott, Ian Botham, Mike Gatting... to name but a few.

Riley is new to collecting but I'm sure as time goes on his collection will grow and contain some of the up to date names such as Joe Root, Ben Stokes or Jonny Bairstow.

Cricket has a known history beginning in the late 16<sup>th</sup> century originating in the south east England, leading on to the formation of the MCC and the opening of the famous Lord's Cricket ground in 1787.

Maybe some readers will remember the Monty Python team sketch explaining the rules of cricket, "You have two sides each having eleven men, one team out in the field and the other team in. Each man in the side that's in, goes out, and when he's out he comes in..." a funny play on words.

**Just as cricket has a team of eleven members, Jesus chose eleven disciples to work together to deliver God's message to the world.** His team worked tirelessly, under pressure to make sure the message was taken out into the missionary field. We, as Christians have our own



special collection of names in our Bibles, of those early disciples made famous for their efforts of working in the field to deliver us from our sins. **With God on our side we can feel safe that we will always be "in"... and never be "bowled out."**

*Marie Nichols*



## 75<sup>TH</sup> WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

*Congratulations to Frank & Muriel Bruntlett, who are celebrating their 75th wedding anniversary with the Bethel family.*

# IS GOD MALE OR FEMALE



I cannot think of any time when we could refer to Jesus other than as “He”. To do so detracts from his humanity.

When it comes to God, it is not so clear cut. At the start of the Bible, we have an important sentence.

*“So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.”*

Both men **and** women are made in the image of God! Once both sexes were created God was fully imaged. There are things about God that men put on display, and vice versa.

**God is much more diverse than male or female. Some of this diversity is reflected in the name “Elohim”.**

Elohim is a plural form. Not used to suggest that there is more than one God, but to demonstrate God’s diversity and enormity. There is a modern English usage which tries to avoid being sex specific by using “They”. **In view of the diverseness of God, might this be a solution?**

The Holy Spirit is more controversial. The Hebrew word for spirit, ruach, is female. **There is a very strong case for referring to the Spirit as “She”.** The hymn, “She sits like a bird, brooding on the waters” (S T F 393) encapsulates this.

Wisdom, identified as being with God, (Proverbs 8) is female. Traditionally identified as the Spirit of God, She was with God as the very beginning of things.

**In our conversations about God, we need to be aware that the question is much bigger than our answer, limited by human ideas, and language.**

**God has attributes which are male and female. Our language, and outreach must try to accommodate this.**

*Jonathan Youdan (Pastor)  
Mayfield Chapel*

In March-April Contact magazine there was an article looking at how we address God. The author suggested that the time should be spent “sharing the Gospel to hell-bound sinners whilst the days of grace are still with us.”

**The author’s enthusiasm for evangelism is commendable. However, one of my frustrations is the ability of the church to put people off by the use of inappropriate language. This asks the question how many have not heard Christ because of the language the church uses?”**

Defences of the use of a male pronoun for God are based on two things; English translations of the Bible, and tradition. Tradition is fine, but, just because our forebears did something is not a reason to continue. We are not a project to preserve the past.

Translation is a fraught process. In Hebrew, nouns are gendered, this does not always sit well in English.

**The article quotes Justin Welby who wisely said “God is not male or female. God is not definable.”** The article then goes on to defend the exclusive use of the male pronoun for God.

We should look at the facts.

- Jesus was born, and he was a man.
- Jesus called God “father”.
- Jesus is referred to as the “son” of God.



# WOMEN OF ACTION



## *He Restores My Soul*

A morning of teaching, reflections, discussion, worship & prayer.

**Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> September,  
Syresham WRU Church, NN13 5HL**

For more information please:  
email [dotdunkley1@gmail.com](mailto:dotdunkley1@gmail.com)  
or phone 01208 850626



**REV JOHN WILLIAM  
GOULDER**  
(Souldern Chapel)

John William Goulder was born in Rotherham on the 5<sup>th</sup> August 1935. He married Margaret (Hollock) on the 4<sup>th</sup> August 1962 and their son Martin was born on 6<sup>th</sup> August 1963. John was ordained into the ministry of the Wesleyan Reform Union in 1960, at the age of just 24, and served as Minister in St Just and Carnyorth in Cornwall, Rushden Mission, The Pastures at High Wycombe, Ivinghoe, Syresham, Souldern and Fritwell Chapels and finally Muffield in Bradford,

before retiring to Brackley. Even after retirement John faithfully served God in the chapel at Souldern, as well as involving in the Methodist Church in Brackley and regularly taking preaching appointments in the Methodist circuit. John served the wider WRU as President in 1981 and 1987, with many years on General Committee, and working hard to promote Ministers Provident Society.

That is what John did, but more important is who John was.

John was an unswerving, faithful, totally committed man of God, and this exuded in every aspect of his life. He was calm, gentle, reasoned and always approachable, full of helpful and supportive advice. His family meant so much to him, a loving dad to Martin and daughter-in-law Helen, big brother to Beryl and proud grandad of Lauren and Jack. He was so involved in all of

their lives and talked about them a lot.

Every one of us who knew John, or Jack to some, have stories to tell, fond memories to share, and vital life lessons learnt from him. Personally, lessons learnt from him have influenced me throughout my life. I am sure many of us can tell stories of the impact that both John and Margaret had upon us.

John and Margaret loved their life together, loved their holidays, on their narrow boats and then caravan holidays, latterly travelling the world on cruises.

It is so hard to recount a life so long, and lived so fully, and in the presence of God, in just a few words. Many of John's stories come to mind as I write, and I am sure that is true for all of us who knew him.

Thank you, John, for all that you have imparted into our lives.

## OBITUARY

# WHAT'S ON



## ATTLEBOROUGH WESLEYAN REFORM CHURCH HALL END NUNEATON

After the service there were various items on display with photographs of events, and previous Ministers, including Rev A. Halladay who was a

General Secretary of the Union and also President in 1965. We also enjoyed fellowship together with a celebratory meal provided by some of the members. (Special thanks to those who helped organise and contributed towards this).

We thank God for His faithfulness over the years and pray that He will continue to use us to bring the good news of Jesus to those in our area.

*Sam Downing*

On Sunday 20th August we celebrated the 100th Anniversary of our Church Building. The service was well attended, with over 30 people joining in. The service was led by Stuart Shepherd from our Griffydham Church. One of our longstanding members (Betty) who recently celebrated her 100th birthday was also there.

## ELVIS PRESLEY COMES TO SYRESHAM

The weekend of June 24th and 25th was very exciting in Syresham because it was the annual Scarecrow Festival. It was one of the hottest weekends in the year, but eager families walked through the quaint streets trying to spot all the scarecrows and there at the bottom of Main Street was Elvis Presley, easily recognizable because of his white suit.

The friends at the W.R.U. Chapel are always very involved in the local community and they wanted to be part of the weekend but wanted to present the Gospel in a relevant way inside the Chapel. They set to work making several characters from the book of Acts and here on the photo are Paul

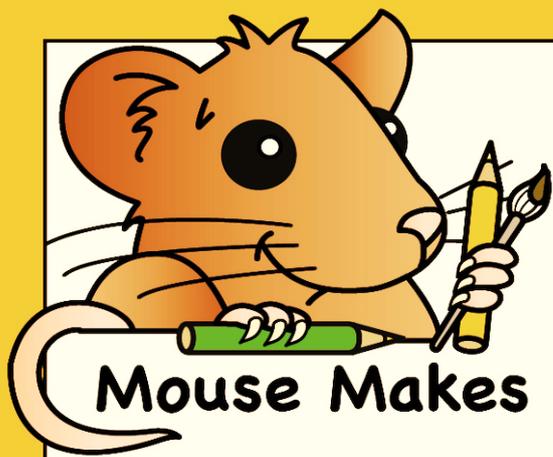
and Silas in chains praying and singing hymns because of their faith in the Lord Jesus. There was also a wonderful model of Eutychus of Troas who fell asleep when Paul was preaching



and fell out of a window of a three-story building and died. This Eutychus was just beginning to topple out of the balcony. Of course, most of the visitors to the Chapel were not familiar with these stories and so members of the congregation led visitors around explaining the significance of the various scenes. As the children left the Chapel, they were invited to choose a Christian book from a generous array of books.

The fellowship at Syresham are always looking for innovative ways of presenting the Gospel to the village. May the Lord bless their enthusiasm.

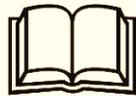
*Daphne Hokinson*



# THE WEEDS AND THE WHEAT

What did the enemy sow amongst the wheat?

\_\_\_\_\_ *Matthew 13:25*



## READ

the parable in

**Matthew 13 v24-30,**  
and **v36-43**

At harvest time the weeds are gathered, bundled then

\_\_\_\_\_ but the wheat is stored

in the \_\_\_\_\_ *Matthew 13:30*

Who sows the good seed?

\_\_\_\_\_ *Matthew 13:37*

What does the field represent?

the \_\_\_\_\_

and who is the good seed?

The people of the \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ *Matthew 13:38*

Who sows the weeds?

The \_\_\_\_\_

Who are the harvesters?

The \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ *Matthew 13:39*

"He who has ears, let him \_\_\_\_\_"

\_\_\_\_\_ *Matthew 13:43*

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

PARABLE • HEAVEN • SOWED • GOOD • SEED • FIELD • ENEMY • WHEAT • GRAIN  
GROW • TOGETHER • TIME • HARVEST • GATHER • BUNDLE • TIE  
PEOPLE • DISCIPLES • JESUS • EXPLAIN • EVIL • FIRE • END • AGE • EARS

Find the words from the questions too!