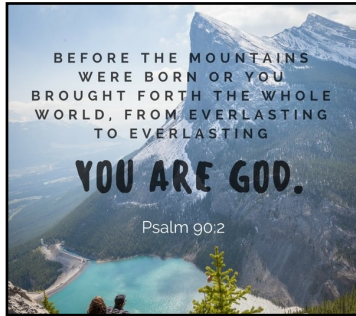


Battle Baptist Church

Being Transformed Together



14th January 2024



Having faith in a faithful God

This year I have started reading the Bible in one year, using Nicky Gumbel's commentary as I go along. So I have found myself re-reading stories in Genesis and Matthew's gospel that I feel I have been familiar with since childhood. And yet there is always something new to reflect on...

I have been struck once again by the strength of Abraham's faith. In Genesis 15, God promises him a son and as many descendants as there are stars, and, although in human terms this prospect seems unlikely, '...Abram believed the Lord, and the Lord counted him as righteous because of his faith' (v6, NLT). Or, 'God declared him "Set-Right-with-God"' (v6, MSG). Gumbel comments, 'The New Testament often refers to this verse because it shows that mercy, forgiveness and righteousness are obtained by faith – that is, believing God'.¹

Abraham was not without fault (Gen 12: 10-20; Gen 16 & 20), but it is encouraging for us to see that he is listed in Hebrews 11 as one of the great people of faith. 'The New Testament suggests that God overlooks the sin of Sarah and Abraham and only remembers their faith.' (Gumbel p 15)

In Matthew's gospel, Jesus commends the faith of several people who seek healing from him: the friends bringing a paralysed man to Jesus ('Seeing their faith...' Matt 9:2); the woman who has suffered from a bleeding condition for twelve years ('"Daughter... your faith has made you well."' Matt 9:22); two blind men ('"Because of your faith, it will happen."' Matt 9:29). There is also the Roman centurion (Matt 8), who says '"Lord, I am not worthy to have you come into my home. Just say the word from

where you are, and my servant will be healed."' He believed that Jesus' word alone was sufficient to heal his servant. 'The centurion recognised that, as in the army, authority comes from being under authority – so Jesus' authority comes from being under the authority of his Father. The centurion saw that when Jesus spoke, God spoke.' (Gumbel, p19)

The attitude of trust and confidence that the Bible calls 'belief' or 'faith' is not something we can obtain without help. Faith is a gift from God (Eph 2:8,9), and growing in faith is a constant process of daily renewing our trust in Jesus. And prayer is the key that unlocks faith in our life, as we rely on God and invite him to shape and guide our lives.

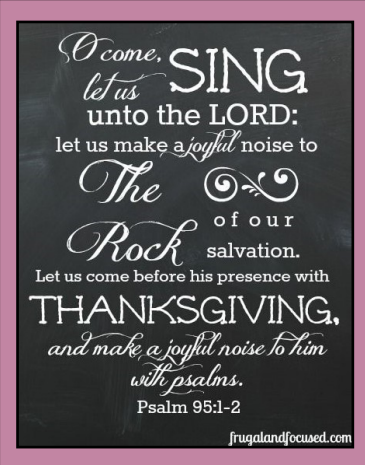
And even then God can throw us a wobbler... In Genesis 22 we see God testing Abraham by commanding him to '"take your son, your only son – yes, Isaac, whom you love so much"' to be sacrificed as a burnt offering. Abraham obeys. Hebrews 11 tells us that he acted in faith that God would provide a miracle of some kind to spare his son – and he does. God the provider, Jehovah Jireh, gave life. 'He saved the promised son from being a sacrifice. He preserved His promise to make Isaac a great nation... In Genesis, Abraham's only son was set to be sacrificed and was saved by God's miraculous provision. In the gospels, God's only Son was sacrificed as the miraculous provision for all people.'²

Therefore, 'Let us hold unwaveringly to the hope that we profess, for he who promised is faithful.' (Hebrews 10:23).

Jo

¹ 'The Bible in One Year – a commentary' by Nicky Gumbel

² 'Jehovah Jireh – The Lord will Provide' by Barnabas Piper



'...the Lord passed by and a mighty windstorm hit the mountain. It was such a terrible blast that the rocks were torn loose, but the Lord was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake. And after the earthquake there was a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire. And after the fire there was the sound of a gentle whisper.'

1 Kings 19:11-13



PRAYER POINTERS

The Middle East

Creator God, we lift to you this 'cradle of civilisation' of which the Holy Land, where your Son lived and loved, is part. We pray that [Israel will heed calls for restraint to protect civilians](#). We pray that [humanitarian aid will be allowed to enter Gaza](#). We ask that painstaking [diplomatic negotiations for peace in Yemen](#) will not be derailed. We pray for the [safety of mariners and their global trade in the Red Sea](#). We pray for de-escalation of tension and violence across the region.

Our frontlines

Please pray for the staff team and all BBC volunteers as they connect with those in our community who come into this place for Toddlers, Renew 1066, BTFC Runners, ASC, Coffee Club and Youth. May we be effective witnesses.

NEWSLETTER

14th January 2024

Battle Baptist Church
Being Transformed Together

Battle Baptist Church is part of Life with Hope Trust; registered charity 1134288, Mount Street, Battle,

East Sussex TN33 0EG.

• Website: www.battlebaptistchurch.org.uk

• Telephone and answerphone
(01424) 774825 • Email:

office@battlebaptistchurch.org.uk

• Caterpillar Preschool direct telephone line:
(01424) 774997.

Church maintenance issues:
zionpremisesteam@gmail.com

NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Did you enjoy reading **The Rest is Worship** by Sara and Sam Hargreaves last year? If you did, you may like to know that there is now a [contemplative 40-day calendar](#) to accompany the book. Ideal for use during Lent, but equally appropriate for any time of your choosing. Ed plans to place an order by the end of the month - please let the office know if you'd like a copy. If we order ten copies, each will cost £6.

The latest news from **Clare Grimble** can be read [here](#). She has sent several photos too: please get in touch with Jo if you would like to see them - or if you would like a paper copy of her newsletter.

Dates for your diary: This year, [church meetings](#) will be held on Tuesday 27th February; Thursday 23rd May; Tuesday 17th September (we will also have our AGM on this date); and Thursday 28th

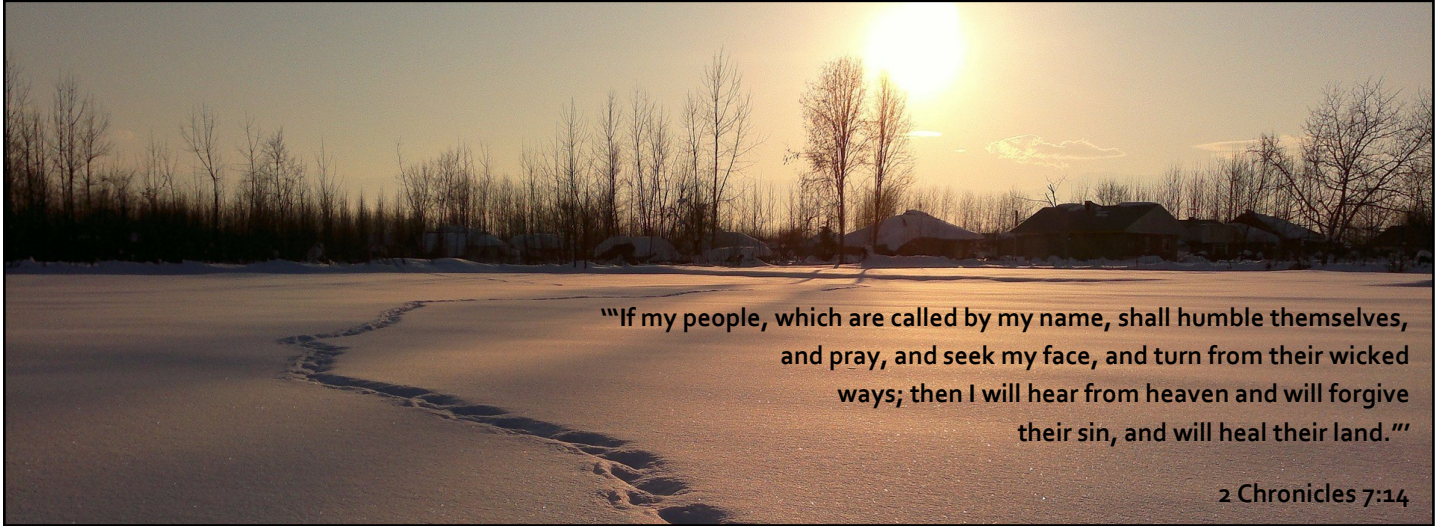
November. We plan to have a Church Weekend together from 18th-20th October. Do save these dates if you can!

Curry Night: A table for 15-20 people has been booked at New Spice, Robertsbridge, on Tuesday 6th February at 7pm. Please let Rob H know if you would like to attend.

The next **Men's Breakfast** will take place on 16th March from 9am at The Chequers Inn. The speaker will be Rhod Jones. Please let Rob H know if you would like to attend.

Prayer Requests: Email your prayer requests to the prayer ministry team at: battlebaptistchurchprayer@gmail.com.

Foodbank: Particular requests this week include tins of cold meat, fish and custard; 500g packs of sugar; and jars of honey, peanut butter and Marmite. Thank you for your ongoing support.



“If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.”

2 Chronicles 7:14

What's on this week...

Caterpillar Pre-School is open Monday to Friday this week.

Sunday 14th January

- 10am **Worship Gathering** in the Chapel; followed by refreshments in the Manna House
- 6 - 7.30pm **Worship and response** in the Chapel

Monday 15th January

- 9 - 11am **Caterpillar Toddlers**
- 3.30 - 5pm **Chosta** for years 7-13

Tuesday 16th January

- 10 - 11am **Walking Football** at the Rec
- 2pm **Tuesday Fellowship** in the Manna House.

Wednesday 17th January

- 10am - 12 noon **Renew 1066** in the Manna House
- 12noon - 2pm **Warm Welcome** in the Manna House
- 6.30pm **BTFC Runners** meet in the Manna House
- 7 - 8pm **Prayer Meeting** in the Prayer Room

Thursday 18th January

- 3.30 - 5pm **After School Club** for KS2 aged children

Friday 19th January

- 7.30 - 8.15am **Early Morning Prayers** in the Youth Room
- 10 - 12 noon **Coffee Club** in the Manna House
- 6 - 7.30pm **BBC Youth** for Years 7-9
- 7.30 - 9.15pm **BBC Youth** for Years 10-13

Sunday 21st January

- 10am **Worship Gathering** with communion in the Chapel; followed by refreshments in the Manna House
- 6 - 7.30pm **Worship and response** in the Chapel