

Vicar's Pastoral Letter

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Subject : It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man.

Dear Friends,

Later this month we shall celebrate Pentecost and the time when the Holy Spirit came and filled those first disciples of Jesus transforming them from confused and frightened men to men who went everywhere boldly telling people about Jesus and proclaiming Him to be the Son of God. They didn't bring about this change but God did because it was part of God's plan and purpose not only for their individual lives but also the future salvation and history of the world. The Spirit that was given to them can also be given to you because, believe it or not, God has a plan for your life. It is not for us to work it out and certainly we shall never accomplish God's purposes in our strength or by our own cleverness but only by trusting in Him. And so how trusting are you? Psalm 118 verse 8 tells us that "it is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man."

Psalm 118 verse 8 is the actual centre of the Bible and you could say that its message goes to the heart about what faith is all about: trusting in God and not in ourselves or others. Have you ever wondered what the shortest chapter of the Bible is? The answer is Psalm 117 and the longest chapter in the Bible is Psalm 119. Check it out for yourselves and in between the longest and the shortest chapters comes the central verse of the Bible: Psalm 118 verse 8. That in itself is an incredible fact but it doesn't end there because if you add up the numbers of chapters before Psalm 118 it comes to 594 and obviously there is the same number of chapters afterwards. Now, if you add up 594 and 594 what does it come to? 1188 i.e. Chapter 118 verse 8! Have you ever felt that God was telling you something but you didn't know what it was? There is far, far more going on in this earth, heaven and universe than we even begin to imagine and it is all in the hands of God. I don't know the reason why just like I don't understand why so many things happen in this world both good and bad but do I really need to know? Isn't it enough for me to know that somewhere, even right here and right now, there is a point and a purpose to my life that is being worked out by a person and a power whom I believe loves me beyond description and who has my life in His loving hands. I'm not talking about a trick or a coincidence of mathematics but a living Spirit and a living God who has put order and purpose into this world and who revealed it when He raised Jesus from the dead. God will raise you if you put your trust and confidence in the Lord and not in men.

This truth is at the heart of the Bible and it is a truth that the Holy Spirit can reveal to you if you invite Him into your life. It is a truth that can come to be at the centre and heart of your life and you will not regret it. You don't have to have fancy words or be a religious maniac: you don't even have to believe it all: all you have to say is "Holy Spirit, power of God, I want to believe in Jesus as My Saviour but I'm finding it tough. Please come into my life and fill my life so that my life can be changed and I put my trust in You." If you say this prayer sincerely then you will not be disappointed and your life will be given a balance and a stability that you've never had before. You'll have 594 chapters on one side and 594 on the other and you'll be in the centre trusting in the Lord not having to understand it all but believing that all is possible through the power of Him who loves you and who has your life in the centre of His hand.

And so now I'm going to give you a personal invitation to come along to St Mary's Church, Kempsey on the evening of SUNDAY 31st MAY which is Pentecost at 7.30pm in order to see something that will blow your mind one way or the other. It's a film called "The Finger of God" about how God can do miracles through the power of the Holy Spirit. If you were sceptical before then you'll either go away fully confirmed in your scepticism or else you'll begin to believe. If you don't come then you'll never know and that would be a shame and a missed opportunity. It's a completely free and open invitation and I promise you that you'll be able to come and go and will not be confronted by any religious fanatics. The only thing

you'll be offered is a cup of tea, a piece of cake and a warm welcome but I promise you that it'll touch you one way or the other, so be prepared.

With every blessing.

Peter

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