

TINSHILL FREE CHURCH

MAGAZINE



No 358 – July & August 2025

Pastoral Letter - July / August 2025

Clinging on despite difficulty

“Then Jacob was left alone; and a Man wrestled with him until the breaking of day. Now when He saw that He did not prevail against him, He touched the socket of his hip; and the socket of Jacob’s hip was out of joint as he wrestled with Him. And He said “Let Me go, for the day breaks.” But he said “I will not let You go unless You bless me!”.

Genesis 32 verses 24 to 26

We have recently considered this passage of Scripture in our mid-week Bible Study. It came at the right moment for us as a fellowship as we have had to come to terms with some difficult news both nationally and within the fellowship. The recent votes in the House of Commons regarding both abortion and assisted dying have shown us where our MPs and society are in their thinking about life and death issues and their interference in issues which are God’s preserve and not ours. Our culture shouts that we are in control of all things with God completely out of the picture. We know however that God is Sovereign and whilst He may allow us to continue to slide into sin and rebellion as a nation He will never abandon His people and will bring all into judgment eventually. In the meantime we cling onto Him and His goodness, mercy and righteousness. When personal circumstances also challenge our faith and bring heartache and suffering then we also need to cling onto God, as Jacob did, and not let go unless He blesses us with a knowledge of His presence and mercy and strength to cope with changed circumstances. Peniel was certainly painful in Jacob’s case but he came away with a deep sense of God’s presence and a new name- the encounter with God changed him and he knew God’s blessing.

As we look at what has happened recently with spiritual eyes and the wisdom of the Scriptures we know that Satan is still active – opposing the work of God and attacking the church of Jesus Christ. As Alistair Begg put it in my daily devotional recently *“Behind every act of hatred, every broken marriage, every act of injustice – all that represents chaos and carnage and wickedness – the Evil One still engages in his skirmishes, seeking to destroy until he himself is finally dealt with.”* (Truth for Life Volume Two – 365 daily devotions – June 30th). As Satan seeks to undermine our faith and pull us away from Christ it is at such points that we need to cling onto Him with renewed zeal and determination because He is the One who can deliver us and does deliver us. It is interesting that in Jacob’s case it was God who laid hold of Jacob and not the other way round. The Lord lays hold of us, His beloved people, and will not let us go – we are in His grip – we are His. That gives us great certainty and confidence when we experience difficulty in our lives. There is also the comfort of knowing that we are loved not just by the Lord but also by brothers and sisters in the Lord who stand with us and share in our suffering. As we seen recently there is also the knowledge that our suffering and fiery trial has purpose in God’s economy and can bring glory to Him;

“Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you...but rejoice to the extent that you partake in Christ’s sufferings ... if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this matter”

1 Peter 4 verses 12 to 16.

So let us stand firm in faith, holding on and clinging to the One who is True and is our Deliverer and Keeper both now and for eternity. Let us remember the words of the apostle Paul to the Corinthians at the start of his second letter;

“we were burdened beyond measure, above strength, so that we despaired even of life. Yes, we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves but in God who raises the dead, who delivered us from so great a death, and does deliver us; in whom we trust that He will still deliver us, you also helping together in prayer for us.”

2 Corinthians 1 v 8-11

With love in the Lord Jesus and standing firm in faith,

Martin Sellens

Missed a Sermon?

If you have missed a sermon in a series then you can catch up via the Church website. Go to www.tinshillfreechurch.org.uk and to the Home page, then go to the Resources Tab at the top of the page and scroll down to sermons. There are lots available including recent series Martin has done on Mark and the current series in 1 Peter and Alan’s series in James together with “specials” including the two recent helpful sermons Dan Peters preached in early June. Do please make use of this resource.

Visiting Preachers

It will be good to welcome Andy Fothergill to the pulpit on August 3rd. Andy was a minister in the Church of Scotland before his retirement but prior to that he was an MAF pilot and his family were at Tinshill for a time. In September Andrew Rowell has agreed to preach for us – he was previously Pastor at Grace Church in Carlisle when Matthew and Natalie were there – do make both men welcome.

The Confidence Gap

I looked at my bike and wanted to get on it and cycle, but I hadn't ridden it for a couple of years, was much older, over weight and unfit. I knew cycling would be good for me but I ducked the challenge. That strangely is not unlike many people's experience with evangelism. For many in church today, especially adults – evangelism is something they used to do but haven't done any recently and simply lack the confidence to start again. For many of us, our faith in Jesus has become the proverbial 'elephant in the room' in our long-term friendships. We may have mentioned it at the start of new friendships, and our church activity might be visible; but our actual faith in Jesus Himself is conversationally off-limits and we're stuck. Likewise, I know so many people, who speak fondly of children's clubs, door-to-door, or of personal witness to friends years ago; who just aren't able to get going again. For many getting back on the bike is the hardest step.

I've observed two problems which flow from this malaise. The first is a loss of confidence in the gospel itself. The second is a loss of confidence in our own calling, gifting and ability to be a witness for Christ. Research in the UK and USA contexts shows that most people who become Christians do so in adolescence or young adulthood. In fact, the proportions seem to drop as people get older. The consequence is that it might have been a long time since we saw someone put their faith in Jesus and be transformed by the power of the gospel. In that context it is all too easy to tacitly accept either that God doesn't do that anymore, or that He can only work in certain cultural contexts, and that contemporary secularism inevitably has the final word. A similar problem arises in terms of our own usefulness. I know many people who saw friends and classmates deeply impacted by the gospel at university; but have been less fruitful in adult life, and have lost confidence in their own effectiveness as witnesses to it.

This can leave us feeling deflated, defeated and a little bit sad. We know what needs to happen with evangelism but simply lack the confidence to put it into practice. What can we do if we find ourselves in this predicament? I have some suggestions.

The first is to be honest with God about where you are with this. Psalm 126 is short and particularly helpful. The first half of the Psalm (v1-3) involves the Psalmist looking back to great things God has done in the past. The return from exile in Babylon under Nehemiah seems to be in view here. The Psalmist renews his confidence in God by remembering great blessings poured out. The second half (v4-6) strikes a very different tone. These verses are a plea for God to restore their fortunes. The talk here is of weeping, and longing. So that's exactly where we should start if we find ourselves stuck in "The Confidence Gap". So, we can look back and see what God has done, in our lives, and in church history; and regain some confidence. Hearing testimonies of how people became Christians is really important – we should tell our stories to each other more! Then we should turn this renewed longing to God in prayer, asking God to restore what has been lost, and to turn our sorrow into joy. Spend time in Psalm 126.

Secondly, we should be intentional and disciplined about praying for people, and asking for the courage to take opportunities to speak to them. Spiritual breakthroughs are won in prayer firstly, and conversationally only secondarily. God can still break through into real-life situations and draw people to himself; and His method for doing that is always prayer. Isaiah 64 is a heartfelt cry that God would act again for His people, which famously starts, **"O that you would rend the heavens and come down!"**.

(The Confidence Gap is continued on page 10)

Book review – John on Jesus and Eternal Life

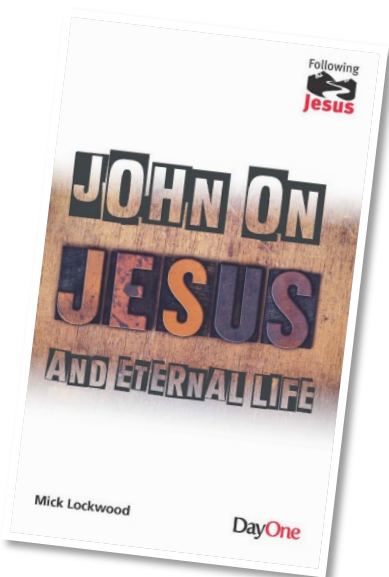
Mick Lockwood, one of the Trustees of our church here at Tinshill, recently gave me a copy of a newly published book which he wrote during lockdown. In the book he looks at John's gospel Chapter 1 and follows it through verse by verse to simply show us who Jesus is and what He came to do and what that means for each one of us. John was an eye witness of Jesus and knew Him as well as anyone so he is well qualified to speak to us about Him. John tells us plainly why he wrote his gospel account **“that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may life in His name”** (John 20 verse 31).

This is a book which is clearly and simply written and which follows closely the text of this first chapter of John's gospel. It reveals deep truth about the Lord Jesus and about how we can find eternal life in Him. It is evangelistic and would be a good book to give to a contact wanting to find out more about the Christian faith. But it is also devotional as the great truths of John Chapter 1 are revealed and explained.

Published by Day One the book is 173 pages long in easy-to-read text. Cost £7.

Highly recommended!

Martin Sellens



Bible Exhibition Pictures

It was a joy in June to host the Bible exhibition again with local schools – a total of about 350 children from 3 schools over the week. A team of at least 15 worked hard through the week to make it possible as Douglas Young from the Open Air Mission led us through the Life of Christ. Next year we host “The Amazing Acts” exhibition in the week Monday 8th to Friday 12th June – put the date in your diaries!





Men's Fellowship outing to Roundhay Park – May 25



Confidence Gap Continued.

When two elderly sisters became burdened for the spiritually uninterested youth of their village, they started to pray, and that prayer movement ushered in what we know as The Lewis Revival. Whenever we are stuck in a rut, the escape route begins with prayer.

Thirdly, it's important to develop a healthy sense of the sovereignty of God. God is in control of all these things and can be trusted – so even if we are struggling we don't need to panic. The Biblical view of God's sovereignty is that our Father in heaven, who knows us, uses us and our prayers in unfolding His will in the world. That means that we don't ultimately need to be crippled by a loss of confidence, as we are not being called to change the world single-handed, but merely be faithful to our small calling. Evangelism is God's work, and so participation is a privilege; not a chore. We can learn to trust The Holy Spirit to take the lead in evangelism, because all we are required to do, is to speak when summoned. That's why Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 3 verses 5 and 6,

“ Who then is Paul and who is Apollos but ministers through whom you believed, as the Lord gave to each one? I planted, Apollos watered but God gave the increase. So then neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters, but God gave the increase.”

Understanding that takes the pressure off us – enabling us to make a small start in just being witnesses; for whom simply being faithful is enough. God also says **“Do not despise the day of small things”**. We know from the history books of the Bible, and from church history, that there have been times when God has poured out amazing blessings – and other times when His work has seemed more difficult. We don't appear to be living in days of great revival, today in this country at least. But that doesn't mean we should 'despise' these days, give up, go home, quit or accept the lie that the Holy Spirit has

retreated to Heaven. Rather we should be alert, watchful and prayerful. We might just be given an opportunity today to say a brief word for Jesus, and be part of chain of events which ushers the mercy and salvation of God into someone's life.

Without my wife's encouragement I would never have got back on that bike. I was stuck in a rut, and just didn't have the confidence to get back on and ride. When Jesus sent out the seventy-two in Luke 10, he sent them out in twos. If you are stuck in the chasm of lost-confidence in evangelism try climbing out with someone else – impossible things can seem suddenly doable when someone has their arm around your shoulder. Pray together, and look for opportunities together; the difference is remarkable.

That first bike ride was a nightmare. I was so out of shape that I almost gave up within a mile of my house - I live in an especially hilly area! At the top of the first climb I all but came off the bike, my head hurt and I felt sick. Later that week, the climb was slightly easier, and every ride hurt less than the last. Recently I did a 100 mile ride around mountain Perthshire which was utterly glorious. And I wondered why it had taken me so long to get going again.

May God renew our confidence in Him, and revitalise us, and send us out with the gospel with such joy and conviction that we wonder why on earth it took us so long to get going!

Gareth Matthews, Assistant Director (Scotland) with Solas, used with permission and abridged.

Note: Solas (the Gaelic word for "light") is a Christian Charity based in Scotland but working across the whole of the UK. The Solas vision is to share the good news of Jesus persuasively and equip Christians for evangelism practically.

Diary

July

Thu	10	7.30pm	Missionary Prayer Group
Fri	11	6pm	Final Ketchup before summer break
Sun	13	4.30pm	Fellowship Tea before Evening Service
Tue	15	1pm	Men's Fellowship trip out – meet at church
Wed	16	1.15pm	Final Tots Club before summer break
Thu	17	1pm	Thursday at Two summer meal
		7.30pm	Final Rock up before summer break
Mon	28	7.45pm	Elder Deacons Meeting - 68 Moseley Wood Walk
Thu	31	2pm	Thursday at Two

August

Thu	14	2pm	Thursday at Two
Thu	28	2pm	Thursday at Two

September

Fri	5	6pm	Ketchup restarts after the summer break
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Please Note

There will not be a Men's Fellowship meeting in August
Key Club will not run in August giving the staff a well-earned break and opportunity to sit in for the sermon on Sunday mornings.

Next Magazine

The next edition of The Magazine will be for September / October 2025 — the deadline for the submission of items and contributions to Martin will be Sunday 31st August - all contributions welcome.

Bible Studies

Wednesdays at 7.45pm at the church with a Zoom option if you are not able to attend in person but no Zoom option for Deputations

July	9th	Martin Sellens	Genesis 35 v16-29
	16th	Alan Brearley	Genesis 37 v1-11
	23rd	Martin Sellens	Genesis 37 v12-36
	30th	Martin Sellens	Genesis 39
August	6th	Paul Crossley	Genesis 40
	13th	Martin Sellens	Genesis 41 v1-36
	20th	Martin Sellens	Genesis 41 v37-57
	27th	Nigel to lead	Prayer Meeting
Sept	3rd	Deputation	Mark Foster, Slavic Gospel Association (SGA)

Preaching Plan

		Morning	Evening
July	6th	Martin Woodier (Com)	Martin Woodier
	13th	Martin Woodier	Martin Woodier
	20th	Martin Sellens	Martin Sellens
	27th	Alan Brearley	Martin Sellens
August	3rd	Andy Fothergill	Martin Sellens (Com)
	10th	Martin Sellens	Martin Sellens
	17th	Martin Sellens	Adam Broughton
	24th	Alan Brearley	Paul Crossley
	31st	Mick Lockwood	Martin Sellens
Sept	7th	Andrew Rowell (Com)	Andrew Rowell

(Com) = (Communion)

Outside Appointments

Do pray for our men as they minister outside in the coming months ;

Paul Crossley;

Sunday July 13th am – Garforth

Sundays July 20th am - Scott Hall

Sunday Aug 3rd am – Hebron, Altofts

Sunday Aug 10th am - Garforth

Sunday Aug 17th am – Morley

Sunday Sep 7th am – Hebron, Altofts

Alan Brearley;

Wed July 9th pm - Bible Study at Bethel, New Wortley

Sun Aug 31st am - Garforth

Rotas

Cleaning for week ending

July	12th	Kathryn Hibbard, Nigel Hibbard
	19th	Elaine & John Snuggs, Sue & Gordon Chell
	26th	Angela Mathers, Christine Crossley, Rosemary Hilton
August	2nd	Deborah Williams, Eva Ng, Anne Sellens
	9th	Hickman family, Natalie Sellens
	16th	Kathryn Hibbard, Nigel Hibbard
	23rd	Elaine & John Snuggs, Sue & Gordon Chell
	30th	Angela Mathers, Christine Crossley, Rosemary Hilton
Sept	6th	Deborah Williams, Eva Ng, Anne Sellens

Flowers for Sunday

July 13th	Kathryn Hibbard	July 20th	Elaine Snuggs
July 27th	Angela Mathers	Aug 3rd	Deborah Williams
Aug 10th	Colette Hickman	Aug 17th	Margaret Williams
Aug 24th	Sue Chell	Aug 31st	Christine Crossley
Sep 7th	Eva Ng		

Diary of Services and Activities

Sunday	Sunday Morning Worship	10.30am
	Key Club (children aged 4-11)	10.30am
	Prayer Meeting	5.30pm
	Evening Worship	6.30pm

A Communion Service is held every month alternating between morning and evening on the first Sunday of the month and follows on from the main Service.

Tuesday	Men's Fellowship (3rd Tuesday – bimonthly)	7.30pm
Wednesday	Tots Club (term time)	1.15pm
	Prayer Meeting and Bible Study	7.45pm
Thursday	Thursday at Two (seniors - fortnightly)	2.00pm
	Rock Up (school years 7-11- fortnightly)	7.30pm
	Missionary Prayer Meeting (monthly)	7.30pm
Friday	Ketchup (Children aged 5-11 in term time)	6.00pm

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