

Issue 16 Summer
2023

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Do we sometimes
take things for
granted?

Over the last few weeks
we have been following
a new series on a
Sunday here at
Riverside,

'Entrusted'.



Liz and I have both been really impacted by the passage in Colossians 1. Especially that all things have been created by Christ. Through Him and for Him. That means all we have is His first. We simply are entrusted with the things of this world. We are stewards of them for God's glory.

The question Liz and I keep coming back to is...what do we have? We need to remind ourselves that what we have isn't ours and whether it be finance, time, gifts, skills, possessions or words. It is all God's and so the big question is how will we use ALL of this to glorify Him. I know that God will ask me what I have done with what He has given me. I so desperately want to hear the words, "well done, good and faithful servant".

I know I don't earn my salvation. I know my salvation is secure by the grace of God, but I also want to ensure all He has given me is used for Him and His glory.

What do you have? How are you using it for the glory of God?

Pastor Steve



There is a time for everything and a season for every activity under the heavens. Ecclesiastes 3:1

Due to new challenges with my health culminating with a serious eye problem over Easter, I realise this summer edition of From the Waters Edge will be my last.

I thank everyone who have encouraged me over the years and have contributed so many articles.

Bless you.

Les The Ed

Some of you may recall I produced the first edition of

From the Waters Edge

in August 2020 shortly after lock down started,

Pastor Steve was concerned that many of our Riverside brothers & sisters, who did not have mobile phones, were not on social media, YouTube etc. were cut off from what was occurring at Riverside.

We wanted them to stay up-to-date with what was happening so I produced with my DTP (Desk top publishing) software the first Issue 1 which were posted to a list of people we were concerned about and it was on Riverside Churches web site.

Over the years I have covered many subjects and two have been very regular.

The Power of Prayer

In this issue Janine and Marcia's articles show personally the impact of the Power of Prayer.

In Nehemiah 10:8 it ends*for the joy of the Lord is your strength.*

That includes **Laughter** which is one of God's gifts to us.

From the 1st issue I included a few jokes for it is good for your health and to finish with a bang the next page sums up my joy of laughter.

Laughter can even encourage people at work and politics.

Do you remember Screaming Lord Sutch?

Jennifer and I had a photographic processing shop at the Arndale Centre in Bradford.

In 1993 one of our customers, realising we would soon be celebrating our 10th anniversary of trading said, "I'm a friend of Screaming Lord Sutch. Would you like me to ask him to come and cut your anniversary cake?" We did.

Screaming Lord Sutch was a musician and founder and leader of the Official Monster Raving Loony Party.



When he arrived we automatically became members of the Official Monster Raving Loony Party. I guess that probably explains a bit about me!

In 1994 he stood at the Bradford South Bye Election.

As he went up on the stage he asked me to accompany him.

It was 2am in the morning and on BBC TV.

Yes, that's me wearing a red jacket and wearing my Stetson.



When it comes to relieving stress, more giggles and laughter are just what the doctor ordered.

Here's why.

Turn over to next page

Stress relief from laughter.

A good sense of humour can't cure all ailments, but data is mounting about the positive things laughter can do.

Short term benefits.

A good laugh has great short-term effects. When you start to laugh, it doesn't just lighten your load mentally, it actually induces physical changes in your body.

Laughter can: Stimulate many organs.

It enhances your intake of oxygen-rich air, stimulates your heart, lungs and muscles, and increases the endorphins that are released by your brain.

Activate and relieve your stress response.

A rollicking laugh fires up and then cools down your stress response. It can increase and then decrease your heart rate and blood pressure. The result? A good, relaxed feeling.

Soothe tension.

Laughter can also stimulate circulation and aid muscle relaxation, both of which can help reduce some of the physical symptoms of stress.

Long term effects.

Laughter isn't just a quick pick-me-up. It's also good for you over the long term.

Laughter may improve your immune system.

Negative thoughts manifest into chemical reactions that can affect your body by bringing more stress into your system and decreasing your immunity.

By contrast, positive thoughts can actually release neuropeptides (A member of a class of protein-like molecules made in the brain.) that help fight stress and potentially more-serious illnesses.

Relieve pain.

Laughter may ease pain by causing the body to produce its own natural painkillers.

Increase personal satisfaction.

Laughter can also make it easier to cope with difficult situations.

It also helps you connect with other people.

Improve your mood.

Many people experience depression, sometimes due to chronic illnesses. Laughter can help lessen your stress, depression and anxiety and may make you feel happier. It can also improve your self-esteem.

- What's the difference between ignorance and apathy? I don't know and I don't care.
- The rotation of Earth really makes my day.
- A book fell on my head the other day. I only have my shelf to blame though.
- My teacher's told me I'd never amount to much because I procrastinate so much. I told them, "Just you wait!"
- I was playing chess with my friend and he said, 'Let's make this interesting'. So we stopped playing chess."
- My wife just stopped and said "You weren't even listening were you?"

I thought, 'That's a pretty weird way to start a conversation.'

- When a woman says, "What." It's not because she didn't hear you, she is giving you a chance to change what you said.

Q: Who was the first tennis player in the bible?

A: Joseph... he served in Pharaoh's court.

Q: Where is the first math problem mentioned in the bible?

A: When God told Adam and Eve to go forth and multiply.

Q: Who was the greatest male financier in the Bible?

A: Noah. He was floating his stock while everyone else was in liquidation.

Q: What do we have that Adam never had?

A: Ancestors

After a young couple had married and returned from their honeymoon the bride quickly ran round to see her mother.

Opening the door she saw her daughter in great distress and crying.

"What is the matter darling" she asked. Her daughter replied, "My husband has just used four words I've never heard him use before".

"What were they my dear?" Mum replied.

She replied "Cooking, ironing, cleaning and washing."

A waitress had just finished serving in a posh restaurant and noticed a couple at the next table. The lady was tucking in to her meal while the gentleman had started to slide down his seat and gradually disappeared under the table. The lady continued eating her meal, ignoring her partner.

The waitress went over and said to the lady, "Do you realise your husband has just slid under the table?"

The lady replied, "You must be mistaken because my husband has just entered the restaurant."



In Christ Alone

My hope is found, He is my light, my strength, my song.

It was this song that first brought me to Riverside in January 2020....

I didn't grow up in a Christian home, however every Sunday without fail we would watch Songs of Praise on the TV and as a small child I would find comfort in the hymns, even though I didn't understand the real meaning of the words. Strangely (or not) it was a habit I carried on into my adult life and even though I wasn't a Christian I still enjoyed the hymns and the stories of faith.

It was on Songs of Praise one Sunday afternoon in the Summer of 2019 that I first heard *In Christ Alone*. I didn't know it that day, but looking back I believe God was already working in my life and the first time I heard Him was through the lyrics of that song. The words stopped me in my tracks and I re-watched it several times. At the end, I was in floods of tears with no real understanding of why I was crying.

It made such an impact that I downloaded it to my Spotify playlist I listened to as I worked. Now, I had an eclectic playlist that included pop, rock, Country & Western and even the odd punk tune. Yet whenever I was having a difficult time, *In Christ Alone* would randomly pop up. So much so, that Mark and I even started to make a joke about it!

Roll forward to December 2019 and sadly I was physically and mentally unwell. I was so stressed at work, had some health issues and Mark and I were so unhappy even divorce was mentioned. I had an overwhelming feeling that something was missing in my life and I found myself slipping back into the deep depression that had dogged me most of my life. We decided if this was to be our last Christmas together, we would call a truce and try to make the most of it.

On the 29th December Mark wanted to come to Bewdley as he had fond memories of holidays here during his childhood. I am a 'Yam Yam', so it was always Stourport for me, but as soon as we came here, I fell in love with this beautiful town and we decided to bring our grandson Max for a visit the following week. As the public facilities were in Load Street car park we parked there instead of Lax Lane and it was as I got out of the car that I could hear singing.

It was *In Christ Alone*. I asked Mark if he could hear it too or was it just in my head! He could hear it, but we couldn't figure out where it was coming from. The only church we had seen the week before was St Anne's and surely it was too far away for the sound to carry...? So, we went for our walk and when we returned to the car park we heard singing again and this time I looked up at the first-floor windows of St George's Hall and saw people

standing and singing. I realised that's where *In Christ Alone* had been coming from! I felt such a pull to go inside.

Even now I can't fully explain the feeling I had, but I knew that inside there I would find some peace, some comfort and some hope. When I told Mark he didn't laugh, instead he encouraged me to go in. How could I? I had only been to church for weddings and christenings. I didn't think you could just walk in, especially if the service was already in progress, but I made the decision that once I was home I would find the name of the church and look it up online.

I couldn't stop thinking about the feeling I had outside St George's Hall and knew that something special had happened in Bewdley on 5th January 2020. It was two weeks later during my first visit to Riverside, that I realised it wasn't 'something special' that

happened, it was 'someone special'....it was Jesus!

On the way home that day, Mark told me he had been a Christian all his life and had prayed for me every single day. At first I was confused as to why he hadn't shared this with me before, but he explained it had to be my choice and he knew that if only I could find my way to Jesus, our lives would change for the better. He was right....we ended up selling our home in West Bromwich, moving to Bewdley and in January 2021 we were baptised. Our lives were transformed....

Corinthians 5:17 says -

'Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!'

Here in the love of Christ we stand....

Janine Taylor

Saltiness

In Luke 14:34 - 35 Jesus says,

"Salt is good, but if it loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is fit neither for the soil nor for the manure pile; it is thrown out. "Whoever has ears to hear, let them hear."

Salt can lose it's flavour when it gets wet and then dries, then nothing is left but a tasteless residue.

Many Christians blend into the world and avoid the cost of standing up for Christ. But Jesus says if Christians lose their distinctiveness saltiness, they become worthless. Just as salt flavours and preserves food, we are to preserve the good in the world and bring new flavour to life. This requires care full planning, willing sacrifice and unwavering commitment to Christ's Kingdom.

But if a Christian fails to be "salty" he or she fails to represent Christ in this world.

How salty are you?

Getting Muddy for Youth Camp

In the middle of June, I led a team of people to take on the Midlands Tough Mudder Obstacle Challenge, a 15km+ obstacle course involving a fair bit of running and lots of muddy physical challenges., in order to raise money to help subsidise the costs of our young people going to the Satellites Summer camp.

I'm not sure why I keep signing up to do these things, but secretly I think I just love getting involved in challenges. I think that is the same answer when asked, *'Why did you do Tough Mudder?'* and *'Why are you spending a week in the summer taking young people camping?'*



The obstacle course was tough and muddy - the clue is in the title. There were times I felt like giving up, times it just felt too hard, and times I really didn't think I had it in me any more. I was spurred on by the other 'athletes' around me and a knowledge that it would help young people to be able to attend a camp where I am convinced they will be encouraged, valued and ultimately hear more about a Jesus who loves them and has plans for their life.

Leading young people also has its challenges. It can be emotionally demanding; it can sometimes be thankless; and sometimes it is hard to see if there is any progress being made in the lives of the young people.

Then, God gives you an amazing moment. A young person asks an insightful question about why Jesus might love them; or they share a prayer they have held on to and where they have seen God responding; or even simply that they ask if they can bring their friend along to youth, because they want them to be made to feel welcome in the way that they have felt for themselves.



Thank you to those who sponsored this challenge. We have raised nearly £1,000 which is paid into Wyre Forest Youth for Christ and is used exclusively to subsidise the costs of going to summer camp, where we are looking at taking a group of 40 from across three different youth groups.

Please do come and ask me for more details before, during and after the summer camp. I am excited to share what God is doing in and through our young people.

Barry Mason



This year at Elim Leaders Summit the grand title was **CO-MISSIONED.**



That yes we are commissioned by God for His kingdom and His glory, but we are called to do it in partnership with both Him and other people. We share in the mission of God with God and the rest of His people.

One of the messages we heard was that of the parable of the sower, that is one of my personal favorite parables. But there was something that was said that I haven't been able to shake.

We don't determine the soil. All we have to do is keep sowing.

You don't determine the soil you're surrounded by, but we are all surrounded by soil. So, the question I am left with, if we don't determine our soil but are all surrounded with it that means there is only one thing left to do. Get on with sowing! I want to encourage you all where you are. You are surrounded by soil. God has determined that. He just needs us to get on with sowing. Will we?

Pastor Steve

At the Sunday service on June 25th 2023 Steve Harris went forward and gave this word



"I saw Jesus, and He was holding the whole world, in His hands.

Looking at the world, you could see some people in churches, some in their homes and they looked like lights all scattered around the world, praying and praising Jesus.

At the same time, I felt Jesus' presence and was very emotional."

We have heard that others have had the same vision/picture! Helen Harris.

Entrusted Devotion

Why don't you spend a week simply engaging with Jesus?
Below are some scriptures for each day, a prayer to pray and in italics something you can do off the back of the prayer.

Day 1 – Read Colossians 3:23-24

Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving.

Jesus, thank you that we don't have to earn our salvation. Thank you that it is given as a gift, given freely to us. But Lord, lead me in where I am working and serving, to do so with the best of what you made me with, so that in my serving people see you.

Amen

Where do you work and serve? How can you make sure you're at your best today when working or serving others?

Day 2 – Read 1 Peter 4:10-11

Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms. If anyone speaks, they should do so as one who speaks the very words of God. If anyone serves, they should do so with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen.

God, thank you for all the gifts you have given me. Help me to remember that these gifts are for others and your kingdom. Lead me in using them for your glory today.
Amen.

What are your gifts/skills from God? How will you use them today?

Day 3 – Read Acts 20:35

In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'

Jesus, thank you for all your kindness to me.

Thank you that your kindness for me leads me in how I can be kind to others and those in need. Please lead me today to share and show your kindness to others.

Amen

Who do you need to come alongside today? How will you do that?

Entrusted Devotion

Day 4 – Read Mark 12:41-44

Jesus sat down opposite the place where the offerings were put and watched the crowd putting their money into the temple treasury. Many rich people threw in large amounts. But a poor widow came and put in two very small copper coins, worth only a few cents. Calling his disciples to him, Jesus said, “Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put more into the treasury than all the others. They all gave out of their wealth; but she, out of her poverty, put in everything—all she had to live on.”

Jesus, thank you for all that you have given me. Speak to me about my giving and lead me in your giving for your glory.
Amen

Spend some time in silence and ask the Holy Spirit to lead you in your giving.

Day 5 – Read Titus 2:7-8

In everything set them an example by doing what is good. In your teaching show integrity, seriousness⁸ and soundness of speech that cannot be condemned, so that those who oppose you may be ashamed because they have nothing bad to say about us.

Lord, thank you for the people that are in my life. Please lead me in the words that I speak to them so that you are always represented well.
Amen.

How does Jesus love you? Why don't you make 3 or 4 spaces today to simply give thanks for His love?

Day 6 – Read 1 Corinthians 10:24

²⁴ No one should seek their own good, but the good of others.

Lord, thank you for the neighbours I have. Please lead me in talking to them and loving and serving them with what I have. Help me to keep my doors open to them.
Amen.

What can you do for your neighbours today? Do it!

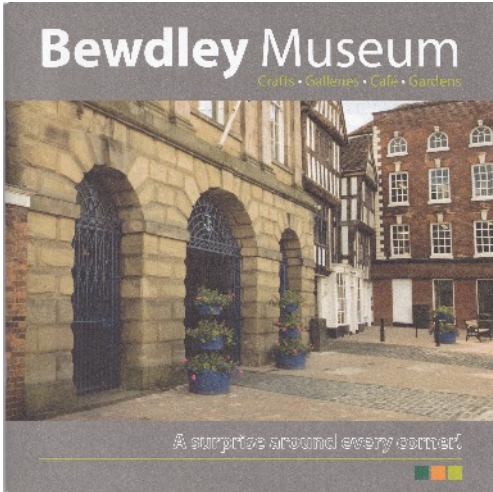
Day 7 – Read Proverbs 3:27

Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due, when it is in your power to act. God, please help me to open my eyes to the people around me. Help me to see who is in need and who needs our help. Show me someone today who I can help in some way with what I have. Lead me in your way for their good and the ways of the kingdom.
Amen

Who can you help today? Go and do it!

Bewdley's History Part 5

Bewdley Museum and the sites history



Bewdley Town Council was created in 1974.

It followed the reorganisation of local government in England & Wales and Wyre Forest District Council was formed inheriting the Guildhall, the Shambles and gardens beyond.

Bewdley Museum

The museum was opened in 1972 as an independent museum taking over the running of the Guildhall etc.

Bewdley Guildhall in Load Street

Is a grade II listed building.

The first municipal building was an ancient guildhall located to the southwest of St Anne's Church.

It was in this guildhall that rioters broke into the building to prevent the appointment in 1708 of the bailiff.

By the early 19th century Bewdley Guildhall was so dilapidated the borough council had it demolished and commissioned a new guildhall.

The site they chose had been occupied by a local grocer, Thomas Wootton and it was on Load Street with the Shambles behind it.



The new guildhall was designed by John Simpson of Shrewsbury in the neoclassical style, built in ashlar stone and was completed in 1808.

The first floor principal room was a courtroom.

Bewdley's History Part 5

The Shambles

The Shambles was built in 1784 by Peter Prattinton, a Bewdley merchant. Originally it was used as a place to slaughter animals and sell meat and by the late 1800s was used as a weekly market offering a wide variety of produce.

The term Shambles is thought to have come from the Anglo-Saxon word 'Fleshammels' which means 'flesh shelf'.

This word described where butchers displayed their meat. Any building in which meat was sold became known as the Shambles.

In the 18th century the scene would have been bloody with animals slaughtered on site with unwanted guts, offal and blood thrown down the middle of the street.

Today the term 'shambles' refers to any scene of total disorganisation and mess.



Queen Elizabeth II Jubilee Gardens

It is an 8601 square metres conservation area accessed through the Guildhall, the Shambles and down some steps. Other entrances are around it from the High Street, Lax Lane and Severn Side South, enclosed by listed walls.

The gardens include beautiful ornamental gardens and fish ponds, a 'Green Theatre', Orchard Area, informal Play Area etc.



Sensory herb garden with water feature

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Bewdley's History Part 5

Queen Elizabeth II Jubilee Gardens



Entering the Gardens from the Shambles the Green Theatre is to the right. Local Bewdley churches use it, including Riverside, to meet together to celebrate Easter.

Redthorne House on the High Street, to the right, was built 1760-70, the residence for Adam Prattington
The car park and the large grass area this side of the wall with a gate were originally the gardens of the house. Today the grass area is part of the Jubilee Gardens.



Passing on one comes to the beautiful Lily Pond where there is an abundance of fish.

Further on is an area with the footpath leading to the Lax Lane entrance.



Liz Cowley is the Collection & Interpretation Officer at the Bewdley Museum and has been so supportive in feeding text and images to assist me in writing Bewdley's History in this publication.

Some of the subjects I was planning on writing about included -The Shambles as a fire station. Stanley Baldwin who served on and off as Prime Minister between 1923 & 1937.

There is Ribbesford House, an historic English mansion in Bewdley that during the 2nd World War was used by Charles De Gaulle to train French soldiers ahead of the D-Day landings. Others include The Brass Foundry and The Ropewalk.

All of these you can find details of in Bewdley Museum plus much more.

Science catches up with the Bible.

Science has agreed that the Universe began instantly in what has become known as the big bang and has been expanding for the past 14 billion years. They reached this time scale through looking back astronomically to the point of origin. The time line in Genesis however states that it was created in 6 days, man being created on the 6th day itself, and a further six thousand years have passed since Adam to today. These two time scales, 14 billion years from creation or 6 days from creation couldn't seem further apart, but it all depends on where you are standing. God would be looking at His creation from the beginning of time, whereas we are looking backwards through time.

Professor Gerald Schroeder, a non Christian, looked at the stretching of time (due to the speed light travels) which science has asserted causes it to dilate by a factor of 1,000,000,000,000. Using mathematic calculations he found that when measured from the point of origin, ie Creation, just 6 days have passed. Put another way each biblical day lasted around 2.3 billion years. During the final 4.6 billion years, the 5th and 6th day, all life was created with Man appearing right at the end.

David Prior



This is ME

***'This is my story, this is my song;praising
my saviour all the day long...***

I would love this to be true but my life has often had many moments of shouting, screaming and complaining before the Lord, much like King David. I have had to learn to lift my eyes to the mountains where my help comes from.

I'm the eldest of three born to ministering parents. My father Jamaican and my mother from London. God and church life is a part of my DNA with cousins, aunties, uncles and siblings. All pastors, evangelists or chaplains.

My childhood was idyllic, from every perspective. A big family, travelling as my parents ministered, memories of South America, Jamaica, Canada and much more.

Experiences of people from all walks of life. My parents didn't have many material possessions but were rich in the love they gave to us and others. I learnt to have faith, be kind and thankful in all situations. I was taught that Faith meant

'Forsaking All I Trust Him' and to memorise 1 Thessalonians 5:16-19

' Be joyful always,pray at all times, be thankful in all circumstances. This is what God wants from you in your life in union with Christ Jesus.'

My desire to travel and embrace people from all cultures and not be perplexed comes from childhood experiences. Visiting orphanages, camp meetings, being sent to play with the

lepers (literally) as mum and dad took services at the colony.

I always knew there was a God. I never doubted that as I saw miracles but more importantly true faith lived out daily.

It was while living as a Nanny in Los Angeles that I began to work on my own relationship with Father. I attended a church called Set Free, the majority of the congregation were bikers who looked like Hells Angels but I can assure you it was to the contrary.

I experienced many Christian bands and concerts (mostly rock and discovered what a mosh pit was) worked at Christian summer camps as a councillor and enjoyed my time hanging with my friends who were as we say in 'christianease' all "on fire" for God.

It was easy to live life as a follower of Jesus, I didn't have to compromise who I was, it was the return to England where things changed.

Moving back to Bewdley was a very different pace of life and becoming again visible as a person of colour I realised a feeling I'd suppressed re-surface, struggles relating to my identity and it was hard finding friends of faith or finding places to fellowship. I drifted back to working at the pub, hanging with old school friends (who I loved) but being pulled back into the lie that partying hard and living like the world was acceptable and my only choice if I wanted to fit in.

This is ME

Fast forward to years of mistakes, bad decisions, suicidal thoughts, feelings of rejection and being unworthy. I knew God was real but I was confused, deceived by whispers from the enemy and the hypocrisy I saw in the church. It took the tragic death of my friend Maggie to bring me to my knees screaming and crying out to Him. Things didn't change immediately but I felt a peace I couldn't comprehend. I began to truly seek Him and face my demons.

At this point I was a single mum to a beautiful daughter, She is my blessing and when she was 5 years old I was working as a Secondary School Teacher. There I met and married an awesome, God-fearing man who I believe Father had chosen for me. We went onto have four children and pass through some very difficult seasons where the heart defect (I now know I've had since birth) which caused me to have heart failure during the pregnancy of our twins. I was told I wasn't going to live and even if they could find a new heart, I was too ill for the transplant operation.

It was a very tough time for all but God sustained us, comforted, and provided for us until my healing began. I survived and am still standing. My physical body may not show completion but I know it is finished, I am healed by His stripes.

God uses all things for his good. My then full time carer, an ex student from my teaching days, came to Christ while helping Adam and I. She has her own family now and we still see each other weekly. We moved to Wolverhampton in 2012, three years after I

first became, ill as I wanted to go somewhere where no-one knew I had heart failure and had been identified, just as Marcia, without people worrying about me.

During our time in Wolverhampton we became established in the community, served as Youth and Children's ministry leaders, led a home group and were privileged to be entrusted with spiritual sons and daughters, and take in the homeless. I am thankful that He showed me that love are all acts of worship, if we stop and listen the Holy Spirit will guide us as we come into union with Him.

While there, a word I was given years ago was fulfilled and we were blessed to adopt our son.

*The Lord is my light and my salvation,
whom shall I fear...for in the day of
trouble he will keep me safe in his
dwelling. Psalms 27*

I have had to learn about roots going deep, standing firm and believing in Him and His word. Without this I would remain broken-hearted, crushed believing the lies that life should end, that I'm rejected, unloved, unattractive, not good enough and just give up.

Covid was devastating for many in different ways. For me it brought the unexpected. My amazing husband left the family home during lockdown (we all have deep wounds and scars) I know Father will never leave or forsake him. I am now sadly divorced.

Turn over to the next page

This is ME

Life as we know it can change instantly. If God is not our foundation we fall prey to deception, old habits (which I did) but by His grace and mercy I am able to keep standing. Every punch life brings hits hard but I know he has buffered me and continues to wipe my tears.

I never wanted to be as the world says a single mum but here I am.... but I'm facing and fighting the battles of life, raising children with their struggles and needs with Him by my side.

He is faithful, cast all your cares upon Him, he truly cares! I give Him everything daily, I still shout, scream, cry and rejoice.

He knows the desires of my heart, I choose joy, to trust, to believe that He will complete the work He has started. My experiences to date have moulded me into who I am becoming.

I am the daughter of the King, I am loved and he knows the plans he has for me as I fix my eyes on Him.

Marcia Wrighton

My Picture from God Open Up to the Holy Spirit

I am a flower tightly closed in bud.

God tells me to open up, allowing my petals to unfurl and display the beauty that God has put within me.

He tells me that the Holy Spirit is unable to enter in without my permission.

I need to embrace all the wonderful things that God has for me, to bloom as a flower.

*How tight I can be, within my own set boundaries,
doing everything in my own limited strength.*

“I can do everything through Him who gives me strength.” (Philippians 4:13)

Josie Edwards

Do we sometimes take things for granted?

Though life might be a little more challenging in the UK at the moment spare a thought for those in Ukraine, in Turkey and so many other areas of the world, including Kenya.

I heard from Judi and Terry Mott this week, and one or two of their prayer requests and comments made me think about taking certain things for granted.

This is an extract from Judi' email

The least healthy foods in Kenya are the cheapest. Most people depend on maize flour to make porridge and their energy staple food is called ugali (type of corn flour)

Unfortunately, though calorie dense, maize has no other nutritional value and no flavour which means sugar is added to make it edible, and equally lots of salt is added to make the ugali edible. Fruits like watermelons or pineapples can cost the equivalent of a day' pay and apples cost almost twice that amount. When it comes to vegetables, most families around Kosele can only afford kale and a few onions and even fewer tomatoes (the price of tomatoes has risen x 4 in the last year). Most get their proteins a few times a week from beans or tiny little fish. Eggs, meat or good fish very rarely make it onto their shopping list.

People are struggling to find their equivalent of the 'daily bread, they need just to sustain themselves.

Therefore the latest practical plan to be introduced this Sunday is to add a cup of tea

at the 'beginning of the service as people arrive. Many are struggling to find food for more than one meal a day and they generally put off having that meal until later in the day so that hunger does not keep them awake at night.

Many walk quite a distance to our church - by nine in the morning it is hot, by ten it is very hot and many will have been busy at home before starting their walk to church. Offering someone a cup of tea sounds such a small, small thing but the smiles on faces when Terry made this suggestion was priceless. ...We know just how much this will be appreciated by those who have walked and not had anything to eat/drink since the evening before. Now we will draw big smiley faces and the words **JESUS LOVES YOU** onto the cups!

The church plot has also been successful in growing kales this year and they plan to grow seedlings from good quality seeds to give to church members to grow on around their own homes ...(kales also tripled in price this year.)

Do we take a cup of tea or coffee for granted? I know I do. There is food in my cupboard for 3 meals a day! Am I grateful? Next time you have a cuppa, think of the people in Kosele.

Father teach me to be thankful, and to pray for those in difficult situations, and to listen to Your voice – how can we be obedient and generous?

Jacky Garbett



Growing maize at Kosele.



Growing kale at Kosele

Answers to the Easter 2023 Issue on How Well do you know your Bible

Question 7.

What was the name of the silversmith who manufactured shrines for a goddess?

Answer

Acts 19: 24. **Demetrius**, a silversmith who had a large business manufacturing silver shrines of the Greek goddess Artemis otherwise known as Diana.

Question 8.

Who was the grandson of Mahseiah?

Answer

Jeremiah 51:59. **Seraiah**, son of Neriah and grandson of Maseiah who was a staff officer when Seriah went to Babylon with King Zedekiah of Judah.

One more Laugh

A man died and went to The Judgment Seat, they told him:

"Before you meet with God, we should tell you that we've looked over your life. To be honest you really didn't do anything particularly good or bad so we're not really sure what to do with you. Can you tell us anything you did that can help us make a decision?"

The newly arrived soul thought for a moment and replied,

"Yeah, once I was driving along and came upon a person who was being harassed by a group of thugs. So I pulled over, got out a bat, and went up to the leader of the thugs.

He was a big, muscular guy with a ring pierced through his lip. Well, I tore the ring out of his lip, and told him he and his gang had better stop bothering this guy or they would have to deal with me!"

"Wow that's impressive, When did this happen?"

"About three minutes ago," came the reply.

Riverside Elim mobile: 07931 297 962

Steve Robinson (pastor) email : steve@riversideelim.com

Liz Robinson (associate pastor) email : liz@riversideelim.com

Les Dutfield (editor) email : les.dutfield@gmail.com

Church Address: Riverside Elim, Dog Lane, Bewdley, DY12 2EF