

KINGS NORTON BAPTIST CHURCH

Sunday 20th March 2022 10 am

Hindrances to understanding God's word.

Welcome to all , especially Rachel from Wycliffe Bible translators

Opening Scripture

Hymn MP 576 Rejoice the Lord is risen

Scripture Psalm 19 (page 552)

Prayer

Children's talk Veil

Chorus

Notices HG at Chapel, Easter week, Fellowship lunch 3rd.
Chairs.

Wycliffe presentation

Prayer time

Reading 2 Cor 3:6-18 (page 1159)

Hymn MP 459 Master speak

Sermon Hindrances to understanding God's word.

Hymn MP 367 Jesus is Lord

Closing Prayer

Close

MP 272 I have decided to follow Jesus

MP 825 Faithful one

MP 507 O Lord our God how majestic is your Name

Welcome and pray

- Hear what Josh says: "My mother brought me up to be a good and faithful Catholic. She taught me to pray to Mary and the saints, to go to confession every Saturday, so as a result of my upbringing I had a very strong faith in the Roman Catholic religion.
- Working as a plumber a man was assigned to work with me, his name was Bill Murphey, he was 55 years old. As I drove to our work site every day he would take out his little NT and read a verse or two and then he would talk to me about it. This went on for about three months. He would tell me that a person could have all their sins forgiven, and that they could go to heaven, and know that they were going to heaven, if they would only believe in Jesus Christ. I told him that he was nuts and that there had to be more to it than that. I knew that I was a sinner in need of forgiveness, but I could not understand how a person could be forgiven by simply believing in Jesus Christ.
- As a Catholic I had read almost nothing from the Bible. Bill suggested that I should read the bible if I wanted to know the truth about God and salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. "Start with the Gospel of John" he said. I eventually read John 1:1-3 **In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.** Then I read John 1:14 **And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.** The light came on in my mind and I realized that Jesus Christ was indeed the God of creation. I realized that it was because He was God that His once for all sacrifice on the cross was sufficient to save me.
- I am now 59 years old and I know I am secure in Jesus Christ. I am saved, and I always will be because salvation is by grace through faith, not my efforts, it is all of God's doing.
- I now have everlasting life and I know it because the bible is God's word and God is perfect, He does not lie." From UC_teaching brief.doc

✚ **God speaks – from the heart of God to the heart of man - God speaks**

We have heard about the faithful efforts to bring the Bible to the peoples of the world. Thank you for coming Rachel to speak of the work of the Wycliffe Bible Translators. You are doing a great and lasting work, well done.

God wants to see the Bible reach not only the various people groups - but the ears and hearts of every man and woman, boy and girl in this world.

However, there are some hindrances for this to happen: Firstly, the bible needs to come to me, to be transmitted through history into my hands today. Secondly, I need to have it in my language, and thirdly I must understand it.

✚ **Three points: Transmission, Translation and Transformation, x2**

1st Transmission

There are 66 books that make up the Bible. They together make up the word of God in its entirety. It is as if I go out into the foyer and grab a line of books, remove their covers and bind them as one, 66 in all. 39 OT and 27 NT. Not quite an accurate description. It is as if I go touring with Simon Reeve, Michael Portillo, or Ben Fogle and collect together 66 books from different bookshelves from around the world. No, still not quite accurate, these books the ancient and dusty unite with those many centuries later.

They were written at different times, in different places, and by around forty different people of all ranks, who had not met. Yet in all these books there is the same God presented, the same way of Salvation presented. Each one contributes to God's unfolding plan throughout history. A plan that has its conclusion in Jesus Christ and his coming into this world. Like many railway lines coming together which all hit the buffers at the terminus - that is Jesus.

Or all the books are like a whole host of signpost all pointing to one person - Jesus who is the Messiah or Christ, the anointed and promised One.

These OT books were compiled and collected together by such as Moses and Ezra and formed part of the Israel's heritage and very precious to them. They were copied in a very meticulous mathematical way where every word was counted and checked. The papyrus scrolls gave way to books as we now have them.

After Jesus had ascended to heaven, people gathered from all points of the compass at Pentecost. When they returned home many new churches were formed. There was an urgent need for the Bible, the OT and the NT with the words of Jesus and the letter to the churches. So many copies were made and spread around that they could be cross-checked and verified. It stopped anyone monkeying around with them, introducing error, intentionally or otherwise, and affecting the whole. [VW Beetle with engine in the front](#)

Oh how these new Christians needed the word of God, how they treasured the word of God. The word of God built up the new young believers. The word of God protected them from, and refuted, the many errors circulating around then - as they are now. The word of God proclaimed is also the way by which Jesus calls the lost to Himself.

The role of the Apostles was to commit to paper what Jesus wanted to say to the churches. Peter says to the scattered believers **“I want you to recall the words spoken in the past by the holy prophets – OT - and the command given by our Lord and Saviour through your apostles.”** NT 2Pe 3:2

So the preserved OT was joined to the newly written NT, like the script to a play, - the final scene is now added - which makes everything else make sense – It completes the whole.

Well these copies, initially in Greek, were quickly translated into to the languages of the many nations where the churches were formed, **Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome,.. Cretans and Arabs** Acts 2:9-11

✚ **How many here speak Greek? Or Aramaic? No or Latin?? Hence the need for...**

Translation

God's desire is that I will have his word in my language.

■ [Haida LPG station Pakistani trying to learn Arabic, mixed success!](#)

✚ **Good translators not 100% but good**

“Haida God's desire is that everyone can read and understand it”

■ [The great English translator William Tyndale in speaking to his captors said “If God spare my life, ere many years I will cause a boy who drives a plough to know more of the scriptures than you do.”](#)

God's plan has always been to draw people from every language and nation.

The problem was that the Scriptures had been entrusted to the Jews who jealously guarded their God. How how would they come to realise that their own covenant God was the God not just of the whole world - but actually for the whole world!

All the nations were to be blessed - that was the promise given to Abraham. Jesus was to be - through living in His people - the **light to the gentiles**.

At Pentecost God gave an extraordinary sign that this was to be the case. After the flood man again showed his rebellion towards God his maker and worked together against him building the tower of Babel. So God set them at odds with each other, confounding their languages.

Now at Pentecost came a reversal, a uniting of people from every language in the gospel. This gospel, this good news - is for all men. The visitors to Jerusalem from all these places said: **how is it that each of us hears them in his own native language? Acts 2:8 — we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!"^{v11}**

12 **Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, "What does this mean?"**

✚ **Good question – this means simply put – “you’re in”. x2**

Tongue speaking then was a sign to show that the good news of Jesus was for everyone. People from everywhere would be praising God **declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!**" in their own language.

So we see tongue speaking in Acts at Pentecost, then with the first gentile convert Cornelius in Acts 10 – and then the capitol of the Asian gentile world; Ephesus in Acts 19. Paul reminded the church in Corinth that this was a sign for non-believers. God's plan is for everyone to hear.

No you don't have to learn Hebrew, Aramaic or Greek – God's plan is that **that each of us hears his word in our own native language.**

Speaking in tongues was a temporary statement. For that to happen today, in fact ever since the church was formed, there needs to be a translation, x2 (A translation from the Bible languages of Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek.)

The hard-working Wycliffe Bible translators along with many helpers beaver away translating from these languages so we can read it.

Translators have a favourite verse found in Nehemiah 8. The Jews have returned from Exile in Babylon, three generations have passed away and they now speak Aramaic. When they return to the Land and return to the Bible they struggle to understand the Hebrew.

When God's word is read out publically it says **The Levites—instructed the people in the Law while the people were standing there. They read from the Book of the Law of God, making it clear and giving the meaning so that the people could understand what was being read."** Ne 8:7-8

-making it clear and giving the meaning.

They made it **clear** - they translated it – they explained it **giving the meaning** - so that the people **could understand** what was being read!

What was the result? – **Then all the people went away to eat and drink, to send portions of food and to celebrate with great joy, because they now understood the words that had been made known to them."** Ne 8:12

Finally; Transformation

The point of the Bible being preserved as it has been, and the Bible being translated as it has been - is that it does something in you x2.

“Transformation”, you might say “I know of no transformation in me” You say: “I understand the essentials of the faith yet if I’m honest there’s no great inner transformation in me”.

The problem is that when you read the Bible, as many do, - and as I used to do from time to time, - all that happens is it got no further than my retina. It remains there, left hanging upside down as it were.

✚ **Here is the third obstacle to understanding God's word, - me, it's me.**

Two or more people may be reading the same passage of scripture and yet only one sees it. There is nothing wrong with the eyes, for the same text is read out, no it is deeper than that – it's the heart.

The problem is every heart is darkened, that's why can't I see it. Hear Paul explain how Christians in Ephesus were before Jesus came to them. **“they were darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God and ignorant - How? Why? - due to the hardening of their hearts.”** Eph 4:18

✚ **There in my heart, darkness prevails, until the light of Christ shines in.**

The state of my heart means I cannot see! – that will confuse any doctor in the house but that is the reason, a sickness in my heart means I cannot see! Since Adam and Eve there is something fundamentally wrong with each of us. My heart and yours, our inner being is corrupted.

■ **Just like software virus, we have a soul virus.**

■ **About 385,000 babies are born each day according to the UN.**

Everyone is born with a veil over their hearts, everyone.

Since Adam and Eve disobeyed God we read 14 **their minds were made dull, for to this day the same veil remains when the old covenant – the OT - is read.**

Pick up the Bible, it has come to you, pick up the Bible in your own language, nice clear easy to read English, yet the meaning is obscured.

1. For millions of people who read the Bible - there is just nothing there.
2. For Religious groups, Bible based groups, it is just a closed book. **Clasp?**
3. For some in this room reading the Bible is a duty, - a joyless duty.

I remember when for me it was lifeless - How is it for you?

There's a veil x2 - **It has not been removed, because only in Christ is it taken away.** ¹⁵ **Even to this day when Moses is read, a veil covers their hearts.**

But whenever anyone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. ^{v16} The veil that obscures, that hinders, that darkness in my heart, is removed in Christ.

Turn

That is why many receive nothing – there's no transformation because there's no turning, there's no Lord there. Whatever is there, it not the Lord.

But whenever anyone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away

There's no Lord because there been no genuine turning – no repentance.

CROSS - Turn to the Lord of Glory who came to hang on a cross and take punishment, etc.,

There is a problem and that is a wrong idea about what it is to be a Christian

Turning means repenting which means a change of direction, a new boss. A new boss means it is not Francis running Francis' life but Jesus.

Can you put your name there and say that? That Jesus is honoured above all

A Christian is one who lives under the Lordship of Jesus Christ. - No less!

Be very careful about getting just a little sampling of God - and then putting the brakes on restricting his invasion of other areas of your life – that is playing with eternal fire.

If I can paraphrase a one Oliver Reece who says with biting sarcasm:

“I would like to have £3 of God please. £3 of God please.

4. Not enough to explode my soul or disturb my sleep, just enough to heat a cup of warm milk, to give me a snooze in the sunshine.
5. Not so much to make me forsake the things I love in this world.
6. Not so much that I respond lovingly and graciously to those who say bad things against me.
7. I want ecstasy not transformation.
8. I want the comfort of the womb not a new birth.
9. I want a full sack of eternal life please, but I only want to buy £3 worth of God.

Yuck, such an approach nauseates and grieves the heart of God!

✚ **Don't play with him, take him or leave him.**

✚ **Don't play with him, embrace him or reject him.**

Don't learn the language and toss around the cliches. Don't run with church people. There is no 'little bit' of Jesus, that occasional prayer at home, that occasional involvement with church things will make no difference.

✚ **It is get in or get out, with Jesus Christ it is either fully believe or reject.**

If that is you – Then I plead with you take him seriously. Bow down to Jesus and acknowledged Him as Lord of the universe and the one you will serve for the rest of your days. Do that and something happens. You will get up from your knees a changed man or changed woman. You will now see things differently. Now there is someone there and that someone speaks to you. He may nudge your heart, but he speaks in the clearest of ways when this Book is read and he is there to interpret and make it real for you.

- A couple of weeks ago in the children's talk they were surprised to find that the Bible is a talking book.

- Judde Ram speaking at BCM brought some of his books with him, I have been reading one, when I do so his words ring in my ears

- Maybe you have had that experience, you read a letter and it is as if you can hear the person speak.

✚ **A Christian is one who lives under the Lordship of Jesus Christ. No less**

In the Bible the voice of God is heard, not audibly - but real none the less.

Nicolai Grundtvig was the son of a pastor, and was born at Udby, in Seeland in 1783. He studied in the University of Copenhagen from 1800-1805. In 1810 he became assistant to his father in a parish in Jutland. The sermon he preached at his ordination, had the title "Why has the Lord's word disappeared from His house," He wrote:

*God's Word is our great heritage, And shall be ours forever;
To spread its light from age to age Shall be our chief endeavour.
Through life it guides our way. In death it is our stay.
Lord, grant while worlds endure, We keep its teachings pure
Throughout all generations.*

That is all that the Church has, God's Word; this is our great heritage; this is all that man has to guide him in life and stay him in death. To spread that Word throughout the world to all generations is what Christ has given his Church to do in this world." So let us do it." _____ End