



Link Up!

'The salvation of the righteous comes from the LORD; he is their stronghold in time of trouble. The LORD helps them and delivers them; he delivers them from the wicked and saves them, because they take refuge in him.'
Psalm 37:39-40

On Sunday 9th March we will be looking at the parable of the Wedding Feast in Matthew 22: 1 – 14.

Then on Sunday 16th March our Contact Group will be celebrating their Anniversary and leading our service with Rachel Roberts as our speaker.

On 23rd March we will return to our look at parables with The Ten Virgins in Matthew 25: 1 – 13

And on the final Sunday, 30th March, which is Mothering Sunday we will be holding one of our joint services with Parkstone Baptist Church when they will join with us.

Ken will be taking another week of his Annual Leave from 10th – 16th March, so please respect this by not phoning him during that time.

The Annual General Church Meeting will be held on Sunday 23rd March. No nominations for the diaconate were received, so there will be no election of Deacons at this year's AGM. The Agenda, Annual Finance Report, Annual Membership Returns and List of Church Appointments to be dealt with at the AGM will be distributed later in the week. As usual, bring your lunch to church on 23rd March and apologies for absence can be given to Janet before the meeting.

When a soldier prepares for riot control duties they put on a lot of extra protection. Over their usual uniform they wear heavy body armour, over that a flame-proof boiler suit. They wear a flame-proof balaclava and gloves. On their head, a Kevlar helmet with a visor and face mask, and their boots have extra armour on top. In addition they carry a big Perspex riot shield in one hand, and vicious plastic baton in the other. Even the military working dogs that accompany them wear protective headgear and gloves on their feet. You'd think that they would look quite fearsome in that get up, but actually they just look like giant camouflage Teletubbies!

Much like those soldiers, we as Christians live in a dangerous and violent world. A world that doesn't particularly like us or understand us. Yet as soldiers of Christ, we are thrust into front-line service on His behalf. Perhaps you think I'm being melodramatic, but I'm only using language that the New Testament itself uses. So what are we to do, how are we to protect ourselves from all that the world and the devil would throw at us?

In Ephesians 6 Paul tells us that we're not fighting against physical things, rather he says, 'ours is a battle against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms...' such a battle requires the Armour of God.

Buckle the belt of truth around your waist; the truth which leads to freedom. The truth that Jesus is God, that he loves us, loves the world, and that he died for us. This is the truth which protects us from the lies and deceit so rampant in this world.

Other Notices

During Lent, our Monday and Wednesday Bible Study groups will be following a Lent series called 'Open the Doors' which was written by Ken and Nicky. We hope that some folk from the other Baptist Churches in Poole will be joining us for this. If you want to join in, then the Monday group starts at 6.15pm and the 'Wednesday Night In' group on Zoom starts at 7.30pm. Talk to Ken or Janet for more details.

Rev John Good, minister of Ocean Church in Hamworthy, is running the London Marathon on Sunday 27th April to raise funds for the YMCA, which he also works for. To help increase John's sponsorship money the YMCA are holding a quiz night on Friday 28th March at The Junction sports centre in Broadstone, and inviting teams of up to six people to join in. Donations of £5 per person are required. If anyone would like to join Janet & John to make up a team to represent Longfleet Baptist, then have a chat with one of them as soon as possible.

A Christian organisation called Kick, who deliver physical education, street dance, mentoring and chaplaincy in schools, are looking to start working in two local schools. They are seeking to recruit local Christians for two part-time vacancies. They offer training and access to resources for their prospective employees. If you or anyone you know might be interested in this, then details are on the noticeboard in the vestibule at church.

The heaviest armour that a soldier wears is over their chest; a thick ceramic plate protecting their heart and lungs, those things which are vital to life. Righteousness, Paul says, should be our breastplate. Righteousness is what is vital to life. Not a 'holier than thou' attitude, but the righteousness that Jesus demonstrated; summed up in Paul's fruits of the Spirit - love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.

Our feet fitted with readiness. Isaiah 52:7 'How beautiful are the feet of the one who brings Good News.' Are our feet fitted and ready to bring good news? Are we ready to answer for our faith?

As I watched petrol bombs being thrown and exploding on a soldier's shield, it really brought to life Paul's words, 'take up the shield of faith, with which extinguish the flaming arrows of the evil one'. So, how is your faith? How is your shield that extinguishes the flaming arrows of Satan? Upon our heads, the helmet of salvation. All this world throws at us, all the sin and failure we experience, yet, we are saved. We live in the knowledge of eternal salvation. And finally the sword of the Spirit; which is the word of God - 'sharper than a sword, it divides soul and spirit, it judges the thoughts and attitude of the heart.'

It takes time and effort for a soldier to get all their armour and gear on, and they need each other's help to do it, yet they wouldn't dream of going into battle without being ready. 'Therefore put on the full armour of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand.'

Rev Ken Adolphe