

Coach House Church BEACONS

DIY - COMING UNSTUCK

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I've lost count of the number of occasions where I have done something repeatedly, knowing it was wrong, but still repeating, time and time again.

In our old house, Mel wanted some shelves putting up in a little alcove. No problem said I (on a rare 'ready for DIY' kind of day!) 'It can' be that difficult' I thought to myself as I headed for the tool bag to retrieve the drill and screws. Picking up the first available drill bit I could find, I loaded the drill and set out to do the masters bidding.

Getting the shelves level was easy, and I was feeling quite good about myself as I marked the wall where the shelves would be fitted. Perfectly spaced out and level...all was looking good. I even took a step back to admire my progress so far... this was proving to be easier than I had first thought.

Picking up the drill, I lined up the bit with the mark on the wall and pulled the drill trigger...

And that is where everything started to take a turn for the worse.

The drill sliced through the plaster easily, until it suddenly hit the brick course underneath. The drill stubbornly refused to have any impression on the brick, slipping against the hard surface, it moved sideways and the plaster hole became bigger and bigger. Becoming exasperated I pushed harder on the drill, but everything I did just made the hole more ragged.

Eventually I gave up and then realised that the drill bit was for wood! No wonder it had no effect on the brick! Searching through my drill bits I found a masonry bit, fitted it and went back to work on the wall. It certainly went through the brick easily, so I carried on and drilled the remaining holes for the screws.

However, the drill bit I had was bigger than the screws I had, so the bite was limited, especially I had already butchered one of the holes already. Never mind, it is only a shelf it will be OK.

So, the shelves were fitted and looked great, even if I knew that they were a little wobbly if you pulled at them!

All was well for a while, until I got accustomed to the shelves being a fixture and began to load them with books! I had forgotten that the screws were not firmly fixed and I certainly hadn't used rawlplugs back then. I had stored up disaster for myself, which whilst I had got away with it for a while, was about to be exposed as I added one book to many! The screws pulled out of the wall and everything came down, books and all.

I even remember just trying to fix them up again using bigger screws to fit the now expanded holes. If only I had used the proper drill, the correct size and used intended fixings for plaster and brick I would have had shelves which would have done the job for a long time to come... but no...I had convinced myself of their worth – they looked alright, they looked like shelves should look, they fitted in well, but load them up and anyone would see that looking like a shelf and actually being a shelf are two entirely different things!

Ever met someone who looks like a Christian, acts like a Christian, prays like a Christian, sings like a Christian... but that is where any similarity ends.

Load them up with problems in life and the truth soon shows. I think if we are honest, that most of us have taken on the appearance that we think we should rather than let God mould us and shape us to His design. We don't get everything right straight away and sometimes we can be a bit lazy and take shortcuts so that we are accepted.

It took me a few attempts to eventually get the shelves up correctly, with the right tools for the job, the correct fixings and a lot of patience. It was worth it in the end, but I knew I would have got there easier and less painfully had I taken the time to do things properly.

In Jeremiah 18 in the old Testament, God speaks to the prophet Jeremiah and gives an illustration of what God is able to do with the people of Israel:

This is the word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord: 2 "Go down to the potter's house, and there I will give you, my message." 3 So I went down to the potter's house, and I saw him working at the wheel.4 But the pot he was shaping from the clay was marred in his hands; so, the potter formed it into another pot, shaping it as seemed best to him.

Now the take out from this, is that it is not the Potter who is doing a bad job, but that the clay He is working with is not easily moulded but He continues to make something of value from it.

Later in the New testament, we read the story of Saul, who was the main persecutor of the new believers in Jesus. He had a miraculous conversion experience when Jesus met him on the road to Damascus, however there was work to be done, and for a period of time Saul was blinded and had to be cared for by a man named Judas – Saul waited and prayed, whilst he was prepared by God for the works laid out for him.

We will join the story at verse 10 of Acts chapter 9:

10 In Damascus there was a disciple named Ananias. The Lord called to him in a vision, "Ananias!"

"Yes, Lord," he answered.

11 The Lord told him, "Go to the house of Judas on Straight Street and ask for a man from Tarsus named Saul, for he is praying. 12 In a vision he has seen a man named Ananias come and place his hands on him to restore his sight."

13 "Lord," Ananias answered, "I have heard many reports about this man and all the harm he has done to your holy people in Jerusalem. 14 And he has come here with authority from the chief priests to arrest all who call on your name."

15 But the Lord said to Ananias, "Go! This man is my chosen instrument to proclaim my name to the Gentiles and their kings and to the people of Israel. 16 I will show him how much he must suffer for my name."

Here is a pretty difficult lump of clay, which God had chosen to be shaped into one of the greatest examples of faith we have. Paul was instrumental in bringing the story and life-changing power of Jesus to those outside of the Jewish nation. Those of us called Gentiles in the language of the Bible.

It is amazing how God uses the people we would not necessarily see as the best; however, God knows what He is doing and we have to trust his designs and purposes. Paul was certainly the right person to argue effectively for the

transformation that God can bring about. His testimony of change became the instrument that saw the church as we see it today expand and become solid in its understanding and faith.

God chose the correct instrument, used it in the right way and the result is long standing and even today influences men and women to trust God for their salvation.

I suspect that like me, we can often take a roundabout way to come to the point we intended to achieve. Certainly, my experience with the shelves, helped me to do things right in times to come, but I suspect there will still be times when I take the short cut because I don't have the correct things to hand. I need to learn to do things right and stop trying to get away with inferior fixes. This goes for my life in general.

The D.I.Y needs to be replaced with the Potters careful hands, because He can make something beautiful out of this lump of stubborn clay.

Maybe it's time for us to lay down our objections, stop trying to look the part and admit our failings to the one who can ultimately shape us, guard us, love us and give us an effective life that lasts for all eternity.



PASTOR ANDY JACKSON



Coach House Church

leadership@coachhousechurch.org // 0161 432 5604

the coach house church, 222 wellington road north, stockport sk4 2qn