

Coach House Church BEACONS

CONFESSIONS

16TH MAY 2020

It doesn't seem too long ago that I was telling you about my rescue at the hands of the RNLi off the coast of Anglesey.

What I didn't say and is probably important is the subject of today's beacon.

If you didn't hear my previous effort, then you may need to visit the Coach House Church website to catch up.

My name is Andy and I am the pastor of the Coach House Church and I want to admit something to you. During my ordeal in the Irish sea, being swept out by the tide and strong winds, all the time that I was in the water and plotting my possible escape routes, in what felt like a very long time, I don't recall asking God to help me! Now before you call in to question my standing as a pastor, clambering for my head, let me pose you a question.

Do you always call on God first? Is it the help of our saviour and creator that we turn to in EVERY situation? Do I need to give you time to answer the question, or is your answer actually the same as mine, and if we stop to consider our honest response, we will know that it is almost certain that we turn to God not first, sometimes second and often not at all.

How can I be certain that this is the response of all of us in varying degrees? Well the Bible tells me that this is the case for one!

A lot of the beacons have revealed to us that we are in a process of sorts, learning to hear the voice of God, learning new values, submitting to a higher plan. renewing our minds was the subject of beacons a couple of days ago. Why do we need to do this unless our minds are somehow not as they should be?

What if we have been so shaped by our upbringing, the standards of our peer groups, the rules of this world, that we cannot see how we would need a saviour? If I was to have a wild guess, I would suggest that our thinking is shaped in order to keep us away from seeking a saviour.

But the first thing I needed to admit as I struggled in the Irish sea that April day, was that I needed rescuing.

There was nothing I could do. I had come to the end of my natural abilities, my strength and my thinking.

Time was up, but God had not abandoned me. He hadn't given up on me, even if my mind had regressed back to its natural state – one of relying on myself and not on someone else ... that someone else being God.

The first clues I suppose are in the garden of Eden. Adam and Eve were perfectly content and in their right minds as they walked in the garden in perfect harmony with their creator and there was no sign of stress, contention or disharmony, until they were tempted to disobey God by Satan. From that moment on we are told that something fundamental changed... Mankind began to contend.

Genesis 3:8-13 (NLT)

When the cool evening breezes were blowing, the man and his wife heard the LORD God walking about in the garden. So, they hid from the LORD God among the trees.

Then the LORD God called to the man, "Where are you?" He replied, "I heard you walking in the garden, so I hid. I was afraid because I was naked. "Who told you that you were naked?" the LORD God asked. "Have you eaten from the tree whose fruit I commanded you not to eat?"

The man replied, "It was the woman you gave me who gave me the fruit, and I ate it."

Then the LORD God asked the woman, "What have you done?"

"The serpent deceived me," she replied. "That's why I ate it."

Notice what is going on here. Before this day there had been no blame culture, no putting yourself above another – it had been harmonious.

Now sin enters into their world and suddenly its every man (or woman) for themselves. 'It wasn't my fault' said Adam, 'she made me eat it'. 'It wasn't my fault' said Eve, 'the serpent made me do it' Can you see what has happened?

Mankind's minds had become corrupted, we are not content anymore, we contest that we are alright, when clearly, we are not. And just another thing.... This was on the first day of what is commonly called the fall of mankind. Thousands of years later, we have perfected this behaviour, Paul in his letter to the believers in Rome was brutally honest when he said this in chapter 7:

But I need something more! For if I know the law but still can't keep it, and if the power of sin within me keeps sabotaging my best intentions, I obviously need help! I realize that I don't have what it takes. I can will it, but I can't do it. I decide to do good, but I don't really do it; I decide not to do bad, but then I do it anyway. My decisions, such as they are, don't result in actions. Something has gone wrong deep within me and gets the better of me every time.

21-23 It happens so regularly that it's predictable. The moment I decide to do good, sin is there to trip me up. I truly delight in God's commands, but it's pretty obvious that not all of me joins in that delight. Parts of me covertly rebel, and just when I least expect it, they take charge.

24 I've tried everything and nothing helps. I'm at the end of my rope. Is there no one who can do anything for me? Isn't that the real question?

Paul then goes on to reveal the answer to this question of all questions

25 The answer, thank God, is that Jesus Christ can and does. He acted to set things right in this life of contradictions where I want to serve God with all my heart and mind, but am pulled by the influence of sin to do something totally different.

That's how I know that I am not alone when I fail to seek God first sometimes. I have literally had a lifetime living in a world which is contrary to God, designed to rely on man's judgements and persuasiveness.]

We are surrounded with everything we could desire to make us happy, but our relationship with God remains broken, none of these things mend us fully. The answer is surely fairly obvious. Mankind was happy and content and in its right mind before sin crept into our story back in Genesis. What we need is to have our relationship restored and then have our minds put right. Surprise, surprise, the Bible tells us just that!

Jesus gives His life for us in order to pay the debt owed for our wrongdoing since the fall. God knows that we cannot produce anything that is good enough to pay the price, so He even provides that for us to in Jesus. Then the hard work starts – retraining our minds to think about Gods values rather than the values we have spent a lifetime learning.

So, we shouldn't be surprised when we don't automatically think of God first. It is going to take time getting things in the correct perspective. One that will undoubtedly set us against things around us. But it's worth it.

When I was rescued from the Irish sea by the RNLi, they saved my life that day.... But when I remember the story, I am also reminded that there is a way to go yet in getting my mind retrained.

.... And that makes me thankful that God is a God of grace and mercy, who understands my weaknesses and uses me anyway.

May God bless your day and I pray that you will be receptive to hearing Gods voice in your heart and responding in faith as you develop a new way of thinking.



PASTOR ANDY JACKSON



Coach House Church

leadership@coachhousechurch.org // 0161 432 5604

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