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Travelling Light – Latest News

We are sorry we have not been in touch with many of you recently but the family has been recovering from the sad deaths of several close relatives that have hit us over the last year and it has taken sometime to get back into our normal 'patterns'. The retreats we have run this year have gone well and have been well attended. As you will see we have a full programme for next year. We would recommend you book places as soon as is possible to ensure places as those of you who come regularly know that numbers for each retreat are limited to ensure everyone has the space to spend quiet times with the Lord.

We are also just starting to work on a new booklet which has Desert as its central theme. We would value your prayers for this new 'venture' as we believe the Lord does want us to explore several writing projects.

RM. & CH.M.

I Set Before You an Open Door

An open door invites me to enter
Do I walk in, or do I walk by?
Am I encouraged to walk through the doorway?
Is it intriguing or welcoming there?
Who will I meet, if I cross the threshold?
Will it be you Lord,
With arms open wide,
Speaking so gently Your words of healing,
Bringing me peace so long denied?
I long to walk in,
But do I have the courage
To face all the things
I might encounter there?
I cannot see all that's beyond the doorway,
I hesitate
Shall I walk by?

Yet I can't ignore the pull of the door
Open for me
If I want to walk through;
Whatever I meet
I know it's You calling
And You will be with me,
Whatever befalls.

CHM.

Travelling Light Retreat Programme 2024

Theme for Year - Growing Closer to God

Retreat Dates

Saturday 20th. April - **Through Prayer**

Saturday 29th. June - **Through The Bible**

Saturday 14th. September - **Through Silence**

Saturday 2nd. November - **Through Others**

The retreats on 20th. April, 29th. June and 14th. September will be held at St. Dubricius Church, Whitchurch.

The final retreat will be at Wyesham Christian Fellowship, Wyesham.

Be thou a bright flame before me,
Be thou a guiding star above me,
Be thou a smooth path below me,
Be thou a kindly shepherd behind me,
Today - tonight - and for ever.
St. Columba (521 - 597)

Prayer for Travelling Light

We would appreciate prayer for Travelling Light. for protection, wisdom and ensuring we provide ourselves with the time and space with the Lord and with each other.
Thank you.

We wish you and yours a joyous and happy Christmas and healthy New Year.

May you know the blessings of Bethlehem

Throughout the Coming Year.

Robin, Carole, Brigid, Sally and Sophie

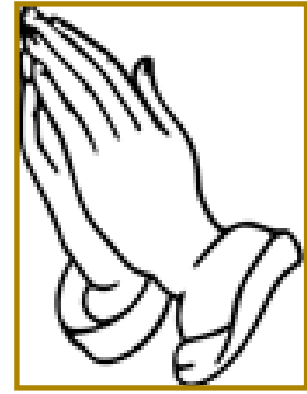
CONTACTING TRAVELLING LIGHT

For normal contact please use the Travelling Light email:

travellinglight@supanet.com

Website: www.travellinglightchristianretreats.co.uk

If you need to contact us on Retreat Days, please phone us on 07910656091. This phone is only operational on Retreat Days.

From Darkness to Light

Eight years ago now I discovered something that turned my life upside down for a while. Everything that was familiar in my daily life was suddenly compromised and I remember my heart pounding as I attempted to convince myself that what I had found out couldn't possibly be true. All the trust I had put in someone who was amongst those closest to me was shattered, and I struggled to make sense of it all, going round and round events and memories in my mind, which seemed to draw me deeper and deeper into a dark place.

I have believed in my dearest friend and Saviour, Jesus, ever since I can remember. We lived abroad when I was very young and my parents would often go out to parties, leaving me with someone who would look after my brother and me. I recall clearly how when they were out I prayed that my parents would come home safely; I think I was fearful when they were out at night and asked Jesus to stay with me.

So, fast forward to my early sixties, eight years ago, and the first thing I did in the situation I found myself in was pray and pray and pray, but even so I allowed the things that were happening around me as my close relationship disintegrated, to dominate my days. Instead of bathing in the light of Jesus, I pursued a path of trying to get to grips with what was going on and solve it all myself. So much so, that I stopped praying. I knew others were praying and I didn't let go of my faith, but I slowly found that I wasn't talking to God, reading my Bible or listening to worship songs. Instead I was listening to music that I can only describe as laments about lost things.

And then!!

It was almost as though The Lord was patiently waiting to 'catch' me. In fact, I did start to pray, as friends encouraged me to pray myself and not rely on their prayers. At first they were simple prayers, and one of them I remember was 'Lord Jesus, please catch me if I fall' and I would pray that as I went to bed each night. I then went to a conference where someone gave me a word they had had for me and it was this: 'The Lord wants you to know He will catch you if you fall.' What? I knew this person had no idea I had prayed that for myself, and I realised then that Jesus was involved in every part of what I was going through – His Light penetrated to where I was smarting, licking my wounds and hiding, and that realisation led to me allowing Him back into my life in stages, so that like a spotlight on a theatrical stage, the light got brighter and brighter until it illuminated everything in the darkness that had surrounded me.

And then I met Robin and Carole, and Travelling Light. That first day I came along to their retreat, The Light burst through much of the remaining shadows, as people surrounded me with genuine Christian love and warmth – yes, Jesus, The Light of the World uses His followers to radiate His light into people's lives and there were several people there that day that brought more of His light into my situation.

Several years on, I can honestly say that I have left that darkness behind. It no longer has a hold on me, as I have witnessed for myself how strong The Light of Jesus truly is. It is liberating, it dispels the darkness, bringing us into a deeper relationship with Him who is The Light of the World.



Using God's Gifts

Matthew 25 v. 14-30

Matthew tells us that Jesus is speaking about the Kingdom of God, reminding us about a new king, Jesus Christ and his Kingdom. God's King and his coming Kingdom is at the heart of our faith; we pray for it every time we say The Lord's Prayer. It is good news, because it is about God wanting to restore right relationships across all of his creation, and with us, his children, and is shown through all that he does. This parable speaks of waiting for the return of Jesus, our King. The master represents Jesus, and his servants his church family, who have received their various responsibilities. The master's departure represents the departure of the earthly

Jesus, while his return represents his second coming, where he will give his heavenly rewards to his good servants.

In Jesus' time, a talent was a very large amount of money. The master would have distributed the talents, not equally, but according to the ability of each individual servant. God has entrusted each of us to carry on his Kingdom work, and to represent him on earth. As the servants were each given talents, God has created each of us uniquely as wonderful individuals. In Genesis we are told that each of us is made in God's image, that God blessed us, God saw what he had made, and that it was 'very good'. It blows my mind to think that there is only ever going to be one of each of us in all eternity! There will never be another 'you' or 'me', created by God!! I hope it excites you that our Father God is a good God who loves each of us so very dearly and wants to work with us. He is not hard, harsh or a bullying master like the third servant feared. If you are anything like me, it is easy to grasp this in your head, but much harder to live day-by-day believing that God uniquely created you, and really loves and wants the best for you. In the parable, the first two servants appear to build a natural relationship with their master, where they are able to serve him. As a result, they were invited to share their master's happiness, and were given more through this relationship.

God has given each of us talents, entrusted to our charge, to help us carry on his work and represent him. I believe that a talent is anything God has given us, whereby we can use it to give glory to God. It could include our gifts, skills, influence, money, knowledge, health, strength, time, ability to love and serve. The list goes on.

I have learnt that it is all too easy to judge another's talents as better than ours, and then hide them away. But it is important for us not to judge ourselves and our talents as better or worse than another's. God has uniquely made us, and it is important to remember that each talent has great worth in God's Kingdom.

Two of the servants took a risk with the talents that their master had left them with. They did not bury or hide them. They took a risk and put them to work for him. As a result, they heard the words, 'Well done good and faithful servant. Come and share your master's happiness'.

These words are full of comfort for us, because I think that we will discover, probably to our amazement, that God will see more beauty in our efforts to please him than we could ever know; and somehow the use of the talent, which takes time and effort, draws us deeper into our relationship with Jesus, and one day will allow us to share completely in our master's happiness.

Therefore, there is affirmation from Jesus for using the talents that we have been given. But it is also worth noting that there are consequences for hiding the talents that we have been given, as the third servant found out, to his cost.

Let us remember to take courage; that God has entrusted each of us to faithfully carry on his Kingdom work and represent him on earth, as his uniquely loved children; that he has given each of us unique talents, of great worth, to carry out this work, and that sometimes we need to take a few risks with the talents we are given.

LOOKING FORWARD

This is the time of year for looking forward.

Advent is a time of preparation, looking forward to the coming of Jesus, which we celebrate at Christmas; preparing our hearts to welcome the Christ Child. It is also the time when we look forward to the second coming of Christ and prepare our hearts to be ready for the coming of our King in glory. Then we have the joy of celebrating Christmas. Yet after this is also the time when we look back at the past year, and look forward to the new one, with all its hopes and concerns for the future.

For many of us, this is a very busy time. Yet for some it can also be very lonely. All the hype before Christmas, beginning even before Advent, can be painful for those who know Christmas will just be another lonely day, for those for whom daily life is a struggle to survive, and for those who have lost loved ones, and are constantly reminded of those with whom they will not be sharing Christmas this year. Christians suffering in Gaza, Ukraine, and other areas of the world, where there is conflict, long with all their hearts for the promise of 'Peace on Earth' to be fulfilled.

None of us knows what the New Year will bring. Yet what we do know is that the Lord will be there, in every moment of it, whether good or bad. Jesus has promised, 'I will be with you to the end of the age' (Matt. 28 v.20). He has also promised, 'I will never leave you nor forsake you' (Heb. 13 v. 5). He will be walking with us in the hard times, but he will also be with us, sharing in our times of joy.

We pray that God will fill you with His Holy Spirit, and guide and lead you, giving you His strength, protection and peace at this season of Advent, Christmas, New Year, and far beyond.

C.H.M.

The Word was the source of life, and this life brought light to humanity. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has never put it out.

John 1 v.4,5

Our God is at Times a God of Unexpected Surprises

So often we have our weeks planned and we know or expect what is on the week's agenda. This is the way many of us organise and order our lives. In doing this it gives us a sense of orderly living. As I thought about this it struck me that although this can give one a sense of comfort and control in the routine I try to establish each week, am I preventing the Lord from directing me onto unexpected 'paths'. Am I stopping Him from leading me into new 'adventures' with Him? As I thought about this Mary and Joseph came to mind. Here we have a young couple with their lives ahead of them. In love and looking forward to a loving and peaceful start to their married life together. When they were betrothed they would have had their plans for their future. I am sure they would not have been expecting to be the earthly parents of God's Son.

I wonder whether we do consider, very often, the impact God's plans had on their early married life.

So what does this say to us?

God has His plans for each of us. However do we very often ask Him what they are? He will show us through our prayers, through our Quiet times, through our Bible readings and through sharing with wise friends. And these are just some of the ways He does so.

R.M.

A Prayer

Dear Lord, As I come to You this season of Christmastide, Please help me not to be distracted by all the things I need to do.

Help me to share Your joy truly,

With those you bring to me this Christmas.

May it be a new beginning for me.

Help me to grow ever closer to you.

And help me to never forget the enormity of your sacrifice on the Cross.

May I know You even more closely and experience more strongly,

Your Love, Joy and Peace this Christmas.

May I always know your presence, guiding and forgiveness, through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Amen

