

31 JANUARY 2021

CHALK FARM CORPS SUNDAY NEWSLETTER



‘...I will refine them like silver
and test them like gold.
They will call on my name
and I will answer them;
I will say, ‘They are my people,’
and they will say, ‘The Lord is our God.’
(Zechariah 13: 9, NIV)

One of our homeless guests called from the shower; *‘Michael... do you know how many plagues there are in the Bible?’*

Presuming he was asking a question about the Exodus of God’s people from Egypt I answered there were 10 plagues against the stubborn Pharaoh before he finally let God’s people escape from his slavery. The answer came from the shower; *‘Michael... I was told there were 7!’*

Suddenly I realised he was referring to the book of Revelation and the 7 bowls of God’s wrath. I then explained, whilst stood on the other side of the shower door, that indeed there are 7 plagues mentioned in the Revelation of St. John. The number 7 is actually mentioned 52 times throughout Revelation and symbolically stands for ‘completeness’. Who would have thought I’d be having an apocalyptic conversation with someone having a shower?!

The events of the last year have provoked many questions about our world today and its fragility. Some might refer to the pandemic is apocalyptic and others point to the political powers at play. What is to become of us? Where is God in this? Can things get any worse? The Bible helps us to understand so much about our place in this world and the importance of faith. Faith is literally trusting – if we trust in Jesus Christ we can face any future with confidence. The faithful come through trial by fire shining as gold with the dross burnt away.

Revelation is a ‘revealing’. I believe God wishes to reveal himself to each one of us. Prophets of old had visions and dreams in order to reveal divine truth for their generation and also for generations to come. Jesus spoke in parables and in his deeds revealed God’s to us. St. John wrote down the ‘revelation’ from God which remains an encouragement and challenge to the world today. It’s not an easy book to read or interpret. It is an apocalyptic text full of imagery and can be handled in different ways by different people and that’s why we need the Holy Spirit to help reveal its truth to us – alongside a good

Bible commentary I would suggest. Perhaps my man in the shower was an eschatologist (studier of last things) without knowing it.

Back in John's day local citizens accused the saints of neglecting the ritual duties of the Roman state religion so Revelation encouraged the faithful to stand firm and remain faithful. This revelation calls believers to grow by overcoming adversity and sin. Holiness (literally being set apart for God) involves the decision to do good even when evil tempts us and powers come against us. The force of a state may be against some Christians in this world but the faithful will remain with the help of God. Just today on Premier Radio I heard of a man expelled from Turkey for holding Christian services and sadly on 27th November we learnt that militants linked to a terrorist group pledging allegiance to Islamic State beheaded and slit the throats of four Salvation Army members on the island of Sulawesi, Indonesia.

Whatever we face we are called to be faithful and embrace the everlasting hope found in Revelation 21 & 22 of a new heaven and new earth. As the Lamb conquered so the seven conquering promises in chapters 2 and 3 proclaim victory to those who remain faithful. Getting to that wonderful vision may require great trials and tribulations... but did not Jesus himself face the cross before victory over sin and the grave? Our task is to put our trust in Jesus and to remain faithful knowing hope will not disappoint.

**“Look, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to each person according to what they have done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End. “Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life and may go through the gates into the city.... The Spirit and the bride say, “Come!” And let the one who hears say, “Come!” Let the one who is thirsty come; and let the one who wishes take the free gift of the water of life.
(Revelation 22: 12-14 & 17, NIV)**

From a conversation with a man in the shower came some real food for thought. May we say with St. John; ‘Amen, come Lord Jesus. The grace of the Lord Jesus be with God’s people, Amen.’ (Revelation 22: 20-21, NIV).

I wonder what God is revealing to you today?

*Holy, holy, holy, though the darkness hide thee,
Though the eye of sinful man thy glory may not see,
Only thou art holy; there is none beside thee
Perfect in power, in love and purity!*
Reginold Heber (1783-1826) SASB 31

God bless you,

Michael
Captain Michael J Kinnear, Commanding Officer

Territorial Commander's video message

'We cast light, you see, when we align ourselves with Jesus Christ himself.' Commissioner Anthony Cotterill offers suggestions on how we can each reflect the light of God.

Watch at <https://vimeo.com/503431699> or on the Salvation Army's YouTube channel.

Watch again: International Staff Songsters online

Enjoy this online worship and praise service from the International Staff Songsters:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KA8u3x-wC8E>

The video is led by Executive Officer Lieutenant Colonel Jayne Roberts and Songster Leader Dorothy Nancekievill.

Covid response schools resource

This engaging new video-based schools resource for 11-16 year-olds explores how The Salvation Army has helped throughout the pandemic.

Each video includes a set of discussion questions to aid conversations:
www.salvationarmy.org.uk/resources/schools-resources/salvation-armys-covid-response

Passing on the blessing

We have been very blessed to receive regular food donations from local bakeries to support our work. When we have an excess of food we pass this on to the Queens Crescent Community Association.

Their food coordinator, Belinda, writes:



THANK YOU for the bagels and bread that you dropped off today. They were great for our 'Lockdown Lunch' and we can put some into our food parcels tomorrow too. It was also brilliant to have them delivered to us. We often miss out on donations because we can't arrange collection.

Queens Crescent Community Association provide a free Lockdown Lunch 1-2pm on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, where anyone can come to the centre and take away a hot meal for themselves and their family. A foodbank operates on Tuesdays and Fridays, 10.30am - 12.30pm.

Camden Council operates a 24 hour COVID food hub. Simply call 0207 974 4444 and select option 9 if you are struggling.

Into the Wild Prayer Teaching Series

Chapter 9: Called to the wild – crying in the wilderness

This month the 'Into the Wild' prayer series is written by Major John McLean, Corps Officer at Maidenhead Citadel and member of the UKI Territory Prayer Strategy Team. Please find this study sent out with this Corps Newsletter.

This month's video is a beautiful piece by Beth Parker on the joy she finds in wild swimming and what it's teaching her about prayer in the wild:
[vimeopro.com/user108940834/into-the-wild-a-year-long-journey-of-encounter-with-god](https://vimeo.com/user108940834/into-the-wild-a-year-long-journey-of-encounter-with-god)

A Zoom gathering to follow up on Chapter 9 will be on Tuesday 9th February 7.30 – 9.00 pm. If you are not already signed up and you'd like to receive the zoom link and regular updates on the 'Into the wild' journey sign up: <http://www.eepurl.com/g26lob>

Chorus time

This week chosen by Captain Michael

Able to save, able to keep,
Yes, my Lord is able.
Giving me grace, giving me power,
Yes, my Lord is able.
He has turned the darkest night to day,
That's the reason I can say:
He's able to save, able to keep,
Is Christ, my Saviour.

Norman Bearcroft (SASB 235)

No. 1 in the previous SA Songbook Chorus Section this was a favourite. I remember my Sergeant Major playing the bass drum as we began a chorus and testimony time in the Salvation Meeting. Do you have a favourite? Let me know and we'll put in in the next issue.

Song of the week

Amazing grace! how sweet the sound,
That saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost, but now am found,
Was blind but now I see.

'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear
And grace my fears relieved;
How precious did that grace appear
The hour I first believed!

Through many dangers, toils and snares
I have already come;
'Tis grace has brought me safe thus far
And grace will lead me Home.

When we've been there then thousand
years,
Bright shining as the sun,
We've no less days to sing God's praise
Then when we first begun.

John Newton (1725-1807) (verses 1-3)
John P. Rees (1828-1900 (verse 4)

On the television

Sunday at 1.15pm, BBC One
Songs of Praise: Gospel Singer of the Year: Mark De-Lisser hosts the semi-final at Gorton Monastery

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Revelation 21: 1-4

Then I saw 'a new heaven and a new earth,' for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband.

And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, 'Look! God's dwelling-place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. "He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death" or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.'

On the radio

Sunday at 8.10am, BBC Radio 4
Sunday Worship: The Dean of Belfast, whose cathedral stands not far from the docks in Belfast, reflects on those who go down to the sea in ships.

On the internet

Sunday at 11am, Fortress Radio
Join Fortress Radio online for a Sunday morning holiness meeting.
www.fortressradio.online

Sunday at 6pm, Fortress Radio
Salvation meeting followed by an hour with the ISB
www.fortressradio.online