

Coming Up at St Mark's

LENT MISSION COURSE:

Oatlands Free Car Washing

Come and wash cars on the streets – for free! Sunday 10th March, 2-4pm. From church. Bring a bucket and sponge.

Ashfield Home Spend time with residents and share communion

Now on Monday 25th March, 1.45pm.

Lent Lunch for our charities.

This Thursday March 14th, 12pm.

Contact Jose Rhodes. No booking necessary.

j.a.rhodes@talktalk.net

Men's Weekend. If you are coming please can you book by Easter? Thanks! Details on the leaflet in the foyer.

Friday 22 March at 7 for 7.15 pm until 9.30 pm: **an evening on Emotional Intelligence.** Dr David Walton, psychologist and author of "Emotional Intelligence - a practical guide." This is an evening for everyone to find out what it is and how it can affect your health, your relationships and your family.

Tickets - £5, this includes light refreshments. Tickets are available from the Wellspring office: 01423 881 881 or

office@wellspringtherapy.co.uk

All proceeds go to Wellspring



Please pray for...

Pray for **Susie Appleby, Kath Taylor and Lesley Davis**, all of whom are having or have had recent operations.

Give thanks that **Ruth DC** has been accepted for training in the ministry. Pray for God's leading and guidance.

Give thanks for the **pilgrimage to Israel/Palestine** and the amazing reality of Jesus' coming to earth. **Pray for peace in that land.**

Pray for **Dan, Julia and the children** after a testing couple of weeks.

Pray for our **development of strategy and good communication of it.**

Give thanks for **mums and dads!**

Pray for those in **the media – particularly journalists** – for the redemptive light of Jesus' love in their work.

Mission Partner Prayer Focus:

Ron and Jeanette Happ continue to ask us to pray for the extension of their visa. Please continue to bring this to God.

Please do take the opportunity for more prayer requests/feedback - it's a wonderful way of sharing.

Thank you for your prayers for this church community!

Whole Church Prayer Meeting This Wednesday 13th March, 8.30pm.

Lent Worship:

Week beginning: 10th March 2013

Every week during Lent there will be a suggested activity you can do to make your journey towards Easter. Read John 13: 2-5 & 12, 14, 17. Imagine Jesus washing your feet (You may like to place your feet in water.) Pray for a servant hearts. Place the basin and towel by your cross. Next week you will need: **a cup and some wine.**

The Way of Jesus Six: the Six days of the week

In the film, "About a Boy" the central character, played by Hugh Grant, exemplifies what he calls "Island Living." <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=74256F5Btil>. He is basically on permanent holiday, catering for his own needs and not producing anything. It's a good illustration of how much we wither when we don't work and use the gifts that God has given us. We are made for so much more. We are made by God to work.

We've been looking at issues about work-life balance, what ambition is healthy, how to deal with tricky issues, but in our journey through the seven keys of following Jesus (Can you remember the first five?) we come to number six – the fact that the six days of Monday to Saturday are as important to our discipleship as the seventh. We can worship, pray and study the Scriptures, but as Isaiah said, if we are not seeking the Kingdom in our everyday life, we are cheating God. One writer says, "Often we can get a false idea Church leaders spend an enormous amount of energy trying to work out how to make the church a place where people will want to come to, but they spend much less energy working out how to train Christians to make the most of the places where they already are."

If that is ever the case at St Mark's, let me know. Because our vision is to follow Jesus...everywhere in everything. Like Bob Lavelle. Bob Lavelle died on 4 July 2010 at the age of 95. He founded a bank called the Dwelling House Savings and Loan bank. It was in the Hill District of Pittsburgh-an economically disadvantaged and crime-ridden area. He had taken over the bank in 1957 and reinvented it to assume a new mission. He helped build up its capital reserves over the years by taking a modest salary which reached a maximum of \$15,000. He even acted as a caretaker at one point to limit expenses.

This bank totally rejects the normal banking dogmas by lending to people who are 'high risk' at the lowest practical interest rate. The goal is to approach people with respect and through encouragement and patient financial counselling, to help them become good risks. It is inspired by the belief in home ownership. Bob wants poor black people to own their own homes. In the Hill Street area of Pittsburgh, there are loads of drugs and almost all shops etc have metal grilles to protect them. But Bob refused to have one. His bank was broken into 15 times. It was robbed at gunpoint 8 times. He knew most of his clients by name and often visited them to help them with their finances. If a client lacked financial knowledge he would sit them down and talk it through. Curiously he started this unusual bank many years before he became a Christian. He says that he only really became a Christian at the age of 47.

Lavelle would sometimes evangelise these robbers while they were holding a gun to his head. Some burglars even rang him up to apologise for their poor conduct. "I asked one (burglar) why he was holding me up. He said, 'Shut up and give me that money!' His hands were shaking. I looked at him and said, 'Here take the money, but you can't shut me up. I'm here to help you. You're travelling a dead-end street.' Behind that stocking, I could see that this was a kid who was maybe 18 or 19. And he didn't know what to do after I said that. He knew he was listening to the truth." Similarly, the famous astronomer Johannes Kepler wrote of being "called" by God to use his talents in his work as an astronomer. In one of his notebooks, Kepler broke spontaneously into prayer: "I give you thanks, Creator and God, that you have given me this joy in Thy creation, and I rejoice in the works of your hand. See I have now completed the work to which I was called. In it I have used all the talents you have lent to my spirit."

We need to avoid split thinking. And to do that here are a few hints:

1. Follow Jesus as Lord. By which I mean as Lord of everything. The Bible says that he will put all things under his feet - all things. That means everything we do, say, think, or speak. Every area of life.
2. In your work, don't think you are doing God's job for him. Your job is not to bring the kingdom - that is His job. We pray, "Your kingdom come," not "Let me build your kingdom." The crusaders made this mistake, among others. We have to know that we are called to participate in what God is doing, just to allow Him to use us. The responsibility, the pressure, the need for results, and the temptation to exercise power in a bad way over others is left behind. Just a small thing we do, in His hands, can make such a difference. That is why Jesus uses the parables of the mustard seed and the yeast to talk about the Kingdom. God can use the simple things that we offer to Him to create something beyond our imagining.

3. Remember that it's not just what you do, but how you do it. Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for The Lord, not for people. Colossians 3:23

So, if you're a journalist, don't think of people as stories but as real people. If you're a salesperson, don't think of the voice on the other end of the phone as just a customer, think of them as a person. If you're an employer, treat your employees justly. You are there to bring God's light into every part of the work you do. I love this picture from the cover of U2's album Rattle and Hum - a light is shining on the guitar. They are going to make music which is redemptive, which reflects God's light in the world.

4. Remember that God's strategy for reaching Harrogate is not by us putting on events at church but through each of us being in our workplace and communities and meeting people where they are at. Everyone, whether they are disciples or not, can be brought closer to God. Last week I visited Cornelius's town - he was a Roman centurion to whom God gave a vision. He wouldn't have called himself a Christian, but that didn't stop Peter talking to him. Probably, collectively we know about 90% of this town. God has placed us in our workplaces as ambassadors for Him. Go to work as an ambassador and disciple everyone. So let's listen to Isaiah once more:

Let my people in Harrogate know that they need to turn around.

Day after day they seek my face, they go to services, they sing songs, they pray prayers, asking me to come near them.

"Why do we go to so many services," they say, "and God doesn't answer us?"

Yet, the day after you attend church, you do as you please, as if your work does not belong to me.

Is this the kind of fast that I have chosen, only one day a week for you to turn to me?

Instead, bring my life into your workplace, bring justice, treat your workers with dignity, reflect my glory in everything you do, seek to share my life with others, see my goodness in all the relationships you have.

Then your light will break forth like the dawn, and your healing will quickly appear;

then you will call and the Lord will answer, you will cry for help and he will say: here am I.

Study

Phil 2: 1-10; 4: 8-9. What does this tell us about the scope of Jesus' Lordship? The way in which we do our work? Why do we sometimes split life up into false sacred and secular areas?

Romans 12. Which of these instructions do you need to embrace most? How can God help you to do it?

Matthew 5: 13-16. Are you being called to be salt or light in your work? Or both? How?

Living it out (Application):

How does Bob Lavelle's story inspire you? What does the Lord require of you in bringing justice and wholeness to your workplace or networks this week?