

## In daily life - towards imitation

Frank is a real life opera singer who was due to play the role of Scarpia in Puccini's Tosca. He was a gifted bass singer and had never heard a sermon that connected the Christian faith to his work challenges. On a hospital visit he asked his ear nose & throat surgeon whether as a Christian he should be taking on such a role. "Scarpia is a real scoundrel who takes delight in raping poor, vulnerable Tosca," he said. The surgeon explained that The Lord wants his disciples to do "all things in the name of Jesus" and this includes singing in an opera (Col 3).

After a great deal of discussion and thought they came up with the following solution. The surgeon advised him to interpret Scarpia in a way that spills the perfume of Jesus. "Don't glorify or trivialise what Scarpia is up to" he advised, "Sing the part so that people are horrified by this wicked tyrant." And that's what he did. The opera singer had been helped by a surgeon to develop a baptised imagination. "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom..." We are reminded in Colossians. Sometimes we need good friends to help us develop a baptised imagination.

## Study questions – exploring the information

Read 1 Peter 4:1-11

1. In which verses do we see examples of Godless tunnel vision and which verses speak of God-breathed baptised imagination?
2. What actions are we advised to undertake to ensure our daily lives and work reflect the latter?
3. What is our motivation for this?

Read Matt 23:1-12

1. In what ways were the Pharisees serving another God?
2. What "other gods" are we guilty of serving?
3. In what ways does this passage of scripture support this week's teaching that in God's kingdom there is no hierarchy?
4. How does this challenge you in your work/life?

## Living it out

Who can help you to develop a baptised imagination about your daily work? How can you encourage others?

## Prayer suggestion:

Light a fragranced candle. Think of an area of your work that reflects a tunnel vision soap opera storyline rather than a God-filled story of biblical hope. As you breathe in the fragrance of the candle, be reminded of the perfume of Christ and pray that God will speak to you that together you might write a different story in your work this week.

## Joining a group:

We encourage everyone to join a group if possible. We have daytime or evening groups and youth cells. If you would like to know more, please visit our website, or contact Guy on 01423 504160.

# INSPIRE

LOVING GOD IN ALL OF LIFE:  
THE AIR WE BREATHE  
& THE WORK WE DO

A TEN WEEK TEACHING COURSE ON MAKING FAITH A NATURAL PART OF ALL OF LIFE  
FROM SEPTEMBER 20TH 2015

## Everywhere...in everything

Weekly discipleship and spiritual growth resources for all ages, groups and individuals.  
Follow up material on Sunday's teaching for groups and individuals.

Week beginning: 1<sup>st</sup> November 2015.

## GROWING AT HOME

Three suggested discipleship activities suitable for all ages to help you grow, based on up - to God; in - to each other; out - to mission

### Up

As you look at your hand, think of 5 words – one for each finger – to describe how good God is. Point to each finger as you praise Him for each characteristic.

### In

Pray for all the children who attend the Light Party on Sat 31<sup>st</sup> October. Ask God to shine His light into each young heart so that they can shine for Jesus!

### Out

Send a card to someone you know who will be living out their Christian faith at work this week. Remind them that they are serving Jesus in their work.

## DAILY READINGS AND PRAYERS.

*These daily readings are the same as the ones used in church every morning from 9 - 9.30. Feel free to join us, or use them at home. Read one or both of the readings asking yourself, "What is God saying to me, personally?" and, "How can I respond today?" If you are pressed for time there is a focus verse from the passages. Try reading the verse slowly, three or four times, allowing God to shape your heart and mind through His word. You can use these together with our daily prayer diary from the monthly newsheet.*

### Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> November All Souls Day

Eternal God, our maker and redeemer, grant us, with all the faithful departed, the sure benefits of your Son's saving passion and glorious resurrection that, in the last day, when you gather up all things in Christ, we may with them enjoy the fullness of your promises; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, Amen

### Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> November.

Readings: Psalm 5, Matthew 2: 1-15. Focus verse: 5 'In Bethlehem in Judea,' they replied, 'for this is what the prophet has written: 6 "'But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah, for out of you will come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel.'"

### Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> November

Readings: Psalm 9, Matthew 2: 16-end. So was fulfilled what was said through the prophets, that he would be called a Nazarene.

### Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> November

Readings: Psalm 11, Matthew 3. Focus verse: 16 As soon as Jesus was baptised, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him.17 And a voice from heaven said, 'This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased.'

### Friday 6<sup>th</sup> November.

Readings: Psalm 16, Matthew 4: 1-11. Focus verse: 3 The tempter came to him and said, 'If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread.' 4 Jesus answered, 'It is written: "Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"

### Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> November.

Readings: Psalm 18: 31-end, Matthew 4: 12-22 Focus verse: 23 Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and illness among the people. 24 News about him spread all over Syria, and people brought to him all who were ill with various diseases, those suffering severe pain, the demon-possessed, those having seizures, and the paralysed; and he healed them.

## SUNDAY'S TEACHING: RESOURCES FOR GROUPS OR INDIVIDUALS.

### First thoughts:

Where do you see God's presence and beauty in the work you do?

### This week's teaching in a nutshell:

#### Loving God in all of life: Filling the earth with beauty Exodus 35:30-35 & Col 3:15-17.

The creating of the Tabernacle required significant artistic talents, finely-honed craftsmanship and quality materials. In overseeing this work Bezalel has been "filled with the spirit of God" and the work of all the individuals involved form the ingredients of worship to God. This is the first mention in scripture of individuals being filled with the Holy Spirit and we are left in no doubt that this workplace and this work is to be the very best for God and inspired by God.

**God, through the Holy Spirit, has equipped and gifted all those individuals involved, the designers, artists, embroiderers, weavers, with the skills and calling to do his work.**

This passage of scripture can challenge some Christians who hold a dualistic and hierarchical view of calling or vocation. In medieval times the Roman Catholic church taught Christians that only priests, monks & nuns had callings. The rest, the laity, were without proper callings. **This story reminds us that in God's kingdom there is no hierarchy.** It reminds us that God entrusts some people with remarkable artistic gifts and that he expects them to invest these talents in his kingdom.

Culture in its broadest sense breathes a spirit. Films, soap operas, adverts etc. communicate a perspective, a mindset, a way of living. They create a Big story...

Culture is not created in a moral vacuum. Gerard Kelly puts it like this:

**"Art is not beyond the challenge of the kingdom".**

Many of us complain about the books that people write or the films or soap operas that others make, the stories that they depict. But it isn't enough just to complain about them. We desperately need Bezalels who craft films, soap operas, novels etc. with a different big story... a story which embraces biblical hope.

A good example is CS Lewis whose Narnia series of fantasy literature have sold 50 million copies and had a huge impact on many. We could say that **the Narnia series spilled the perfume of Christ in an appropriately artistic manner.** CS Lewis had a God-breathed baptised imagination which enabled him to create this wonderful world of wardrobes, witches, beavers and centaurs that fills us with delight and joy. And how do we respond to those budding CS Lewis's today? Do we encourage them with great anticipation of the God-breathed big story that they might write. Or are we more inclined to say: "well that's lovely dear but you're wasting your time. Go and be a missionary in Africa." (Of course missionaries do a fantastic work, but most of us are not called to be missionaries).