

FRISTON BAPTIST CHURCH

MILL ROAD, FRISTON, SAXMUNDHAM

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Easter 2006

To the church's neighbours in and around Friston, and also our personal neighbours in and about Aldeburgh, Leiston and Saxmundham.

Dear neighbours,

We would not be human if we did not sometimes admit to ourselves that we are afraid. But admitting it to someone else is an entirely different matter.

For that reason when we are afraid we are also very lonely, locking our thoughts away inside us and unable to confide.

The Bible teaches a way of handling such experiences.

It says, "God is love" (1 John 4. 8,16) and encourages us to approach Him. We may come to Him in prayer. He answers us by the words of the Bible, put into our minds by the Holy Spirit. Words like the following:-

"There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love" (1 John 4.18).

Things we have done wrong torment us. Or, as the Bible says, "the sting of death is sin" (1 Corinthians 15.56). That is, sin stings. It poisons life. Ultimately, it is the reason for death.

Then, when death intrudes into our lives we become uneasy. The death of a neighbour. The looming prospect of our own death. If we will come to Christ we need not be afraid.

So, when we feel we cannot share our thoughts, and perhaps are ashamed of them, we are made in such a way that we can share them with God through Jesus Christ, who said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by me" (John 14.6).

God is love and so loved the world that "He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life" (John 3.16). He did not spare Him but gave Him up for us all.

Such love as to die. The Lord Jesus was willing to die even for such people as we are.

It was a brave death. Nails were hammered through his hands and feet as he was nailed to a cross to die naked in full view of the hostile crowds of those who felt threatened one way and another by His life and teaching.

It was a substitutionary death. The Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, was without sin. He alone was fitted to carry our sins, for He had no sins of His own. "Greater love hath no man than

this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (John 15.13). Whatever punishment we deserve from God, the Lord Jesus Christ has endured it by His death instead of us.

Do you remember the hymn, There is a green hill far away? One verse says:-

"There was no other good enough
To pay the price of sin.
He only could unlock the gates
Of heaven and let us in".

It was an effective death. The sins were paid for and justice satisfied for every believer. The Saviour knew in advance who they would be and atoned for their sins.

"Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you" (John 15. 13-14).

What does He command? That we trust Him. "Be not faithless but believing" (John 20.27).

This is perfect love. If we will believe in Him He will forgive all our sins and give us everlasting life. This will overcome our fears of death and avert the judgment due for sin. He has paid the price for the sin of every believer out of love. And we will live with Him for ever in a perfect condition, as He said, "that where I am, there ye may be also" (John 14.3).

Believers love Him because He first loved them. "We love Him because He first loved us" (1 John 4.19). "The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19.10).

Such love transforms His people when given free rein in their hearts. It banishes fear.

We may approach God through Jesus Christ about any matter that troubles us. Psalm 23.4 says, "though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for Thou art with me". That is, if we can have God's presence through the worst fear of all (of death) we may certainly have it for lesser fears.

It is a good thing to humble ourselves before God, and to confess our sins to Him in repentance. He will relieve us of all our fears and give us a new beginning.

We welcome anyone who wants to come to our services. They are held every week on Sundays at 10.45am and 2pm and on Tuesdays at 7.30pm.

At Easter time we will be holding a Good Friday service at 6.30pm on the 14th April to remember our Saviour's crucifixion; and on Easter Sunday at 10.45am and 2pm to remember His resurrection. You will be welcome to come to those also.

Yours sincerely,