

Friston Baptist Church

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Dear neighbours,

Nothing comes easily. When King David was faced with the rebellion of his own son Absalom, his advisers sometimes weakened his resolve by their timid advice. In effect they said, Why not abdicate and let your son enjoy ruling? Give it all up. Truth, justice, honesty, and whatever else underpins society is all going by the board, so great is the popular groundswell in favour of your son, so why don't you just withdraw gracefully and let him go his own way instead? It's what the people want. However, it is written, "My son, fear thou the LORD and the king: and meddle not with them that are given to change" (Proverbs 24.21).

David's reply is to say, How can you ask me that? I trust in God. And if things are so very dreadful, beyond my scope to put right, then He is in absolute command and will impose His justice and His penalties upon the evildoers. I will keep going. He gave me my work in life.

All this is in Psalm 11. "In the LORD put I my trust: how say ye to my soul, Flee as a bird to your mountain?...If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?" The answer is, They can believe. "The LORD is in his holy temple, the LORD's throne is in heaven: his eyes behold, his eyelids try, the children of men." (Psalm 11.1-4)

The temptation to give up and run away from life is enormous. Even children feel they want to run away sometimes. It is difficult to overestimate the pressure of the public will and its powerful advocates. It is difficult to face domestic adversities. But there is another, more subtle, suggestion. It comes from a weariness within our own hearts. David faced this too and wrote about it in Psalm 55.

"Oh that I had wings like a dove! For then would I fly away, and be at rest." But the answer is the same as before. "As for me, I will call upon God; and the LORD shall save me." (Psalm 55. 6,16) He will not run away but face the issues with the Saviour's help.

Many of you grew up in Sunday School or to attend church. It may be that through indifference rather than outright rejection you have neglected these things. Life held out the prospect in mid-teenage years of so many exciting things to do that these early, formative instructions got left behind. Perhaps unwisely, in the event.

The purpose of this particular letter is to encourage you to revisit those times. In beginning his Gospel, Luke writes to an old acquaintance named Theophilus, "It seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee...that thou mightiest know the certainty of those things, wherein thou hast been instructed" (Luke 1.3-4).

If they were learned at Sunday School and from the Bible they were good things; great certainties; unworthy of neglect but worthy of acceptance. Worthy of new consideration in our maturity.

The Bible takes its authority from being God's word to men and women, boys and girls. It itself derives its authority from our heavenly Father, the Creator. It is the ultimate authority.

Put it this way. The Author of life is the authority on all matters. No Author, no authority. No authority, no standards. No accountability. We all do what we like, with no ultimate restraint on our ways. And that is the way society is moving. And many of you will not like what you see.

The Bible points to the Lord Jesus Christ as the only Saviour and stands firm as a rock amidst the swirling currents and tides of ever changing human ideologies.

The human heart craves certainties, as fundamentally as the body craves food and drink. Even a child wants parameters and, without being able to say so, appreciates them as an expression of love, of interest in his/her wellbeing. This craving is not misplaced but the bedrock of the security of the soul.

So when the Bible records the words of the Lord Jesus Christ, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by me," here are a number of mighty certainties. Many will, of course, dispute them; but if they ring a bell in your own heart turn back to the Saviour who said these things and fix yourself on Him. Either He is right or He is a deceiver. Are you prepared to chance your very being on the certainty that He is right? A Christian by definition is Christ's man, woman, boy or girl against all the odds.

Or, when the Saviour says, "I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life" (John 8.12). This is a global claim to absolute supremacy. The light of the world! A declaration that many walk in darkness. But maybe you find yourself in the dark and know that that claim is true. Well, nail your colours to the mast and follow Him.

The Bible deals in certainties. It quotes Job with approval, "I know that my redeemer liveth" (Job 19.25). John wrote the 4th Gospel to secure faith in the Saviour. "These are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life through his name" (John 20.31). It also declares that, without certainty, we are lost. "If the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle?" (1 Corinthians 14.8)

If you wish to give consideration again to these things, our Sunday services are at 2pm and you will be made most welcome. We have a Sunday School for your children. They stay for the first few minutes of the service then go to their own classes. These matters are not childish, to be done away with in mature years. They deal with the vast issues of a real eternity; an actual acceptance of our persons by God and the forgiveness of our sins, thereby securing release from a guilty conscience; a personal friendship with the living God through the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ. These are massive considerations and, being on the authority of the living God, actually convey the certainty of their reality deep within the spirit of every believer in Him. They are life changing.

"Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!...For all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still" (Isaiah 5.20, 25).

The Lord Jesus Christ said, "The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single (not meaning one-eyed, but healthy), thy whole body shall be full of light. But if thine eye be evil (dimmed), thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!" (Matthew 6.22-23).

If you go blind you will remember some things. If you are born blind you will have no idea what even your nearest and dearest look like. The Bible teaches that all people are born blind with respect to spiritual, unseen and eternal things and that unless the Lord Jesus Christ opens eyes we will not see or understand the greatest issue of all - eternal life through Him. "Are we blind also?" (John 9.40)

Yours affectionately,