

Word For The Week

11 October 2019

Preaching Dates

5-19 October 2019

Jonathan Groves in Malawi with the Kerusso Trust teaching at Learn2Serve level 4 in Malosa near Zomba, Malawi

Saturday 12 October 2019

Jonathan Groves at all day Youth Learn2Serve outreach and training, Namitsitsi village, Malawi (40km each way along dirt roads)

Charles Sommerville at Barnards Court Mission, Greenock

13 October 2019

James Ewen (am) at Bothkenner and Carronshore Church of Scotland

Graham Horne (am) at High Blantyre Baptist Church

Sylvia Jones (am) at Galashiels Baptist Church

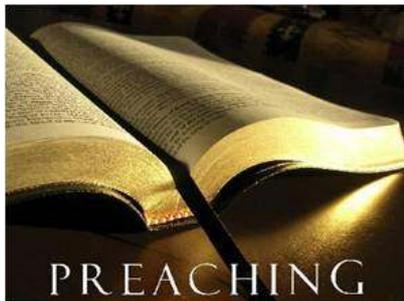
Douglas Inglis (pm) at Newton Mearns Baptist Church

Alistair Mackay (pm) at the McCarthy-Stone 'Granary', Dumfries

Stephen Ilett (am + pm) at Alness Baptist Church

Wednesday 16 October 2019

Andrea Mill in a poetry reading at Islay Baptist Church



"Have faith in God"

By Eric Macarthur

Almost 30 years ago a family crisis triggered the need to leave Neilston where we were very settled, and move to Galloway where we knew no one or the region. Anne and the kids moved into temporary accommodation while our house sold, and I looked for a job in the area. It was a stressful time. As I said goodbye to a Roman Catholic colleague she smiled knowingly at me and said "Have faith in God!" It was a life-giving bullet from heaven, a word I've never forgotten and has sustained me through the many subsequent crises we have faced since.

Hebrews defines faith as 'the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen' and gives examples: by faith people emigrate, disobey government edicts, slaves walk out into freedom, a prostitute helps spies escape (treason?), an adopted son chooses to identify with his birth family...and suffer with them. Then there is a list that includes "through faith conquered kingdoms, enforced justice, escaped the sword, received their dead back to life, were tortured, went about destitute, afflicted and mistreated".

In the New Testament, by faith a woman was healed when she touched the hem of Christ's garment, men made a hole in a house roof to let their disabled friend down to Jesus on a stretcher - he was healed and forgiven, people were healed in the shadow of Peter. Paul risked his life taking the news to the gentiles that Jesus gave his life, in faith, for the whole world. In more recent times Gladys Aylward defied Mission agencies and went alone to China, Jackie Pullinger went alone into the Walled City in Hong Kong and has been used to deliver multitudes from drugs and criminal lifestyles, Wilberforce persisted until he got a Bill through Parliament to abolish the slave trade, Martin Luther King led the Civil Rights campaign and surrendered his life.

Yet we continue to associate "faith" with church attendance, Bible reading, creeds etc. These things are important in helping us grow and exercise our faith in practical ways for the fulfilment of God's purposes. But true religion consists of "visiting orphans and widows in their affliction, and keeping ourselves unstained from the world". We worship God in spirit and truth. "Religious" belief and practice is not faith, and not the evidence of faith.

As we preach Christ, we remind ourselves and our hearers that even the Christian religion is no substitute for the "faith that works by love" which comes by hearing the word of God, an active response to the Spirit speaking in our hearts that changes our lives, and the world, and which can get us into some awkward situations!