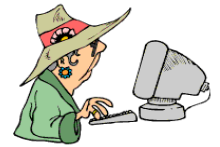


CLUB OASIS FEB 07

Last month we saw the "church" as made up of people who were prepared to put back into it the gifts and talents that they had been given. This month we looked at our attitude, are we positive or negative people and what the consequences of that might be; is our glass half full or half empty ! How does this effect our response to God's blessing. **Jack Heaslip** from Ireland helped us work that one out. (Next column)



Club oasis hopes to link its friends through the wonders of modern technology !! Oasis meets on the Second Sunday of Every Month At the home of Shirley and Peter Massey 1801 Chemin des Pailles LORGUES 0494 739337 www.arc-en-provence.com/oasis



HALF FULL or HALF EMPTY?

Just a thought from **Jack Heaslip**

There are three words in this question, half, full and empty, but it seems to me that the word half stands out as inappropriate when we think of God's blessings on us as described in the reading from the beatitudes. Those who are hungry for God will be filled, not half filled. In John 10:10, Jesus says " **I have come that you may have life and have it to the full**" Half is not good enough in the promises of Jesus, abundance is in the nature of life and the generosity of God. In John 1: 12 we read "**Yet to all who believe in Him he gave the right to become children of God**" not half children, or slavechildren but heirs of the kingdom of God.

But this is no promise of an "easy" life nor an endorsement of the "prosperity" gospel with its distorted version of the nature of God's blessing with either a qualification or veiled threat attached. But it is a promise of the fullness of God's Grace to those who accept Jesus and believe in Him.

Today there is a new challenge; can we live in the fullness of God's blessing for each one of us. Are we prepared to invest time to realise the enormity of God's love, a love that is unconditional as shown on the cross. Can we demonstrate that acceptance of love through our homes, our families our workplaces and even our churches!

Blessed is he who expects God's Grace in its fullness for he shall never be disappointed !

Today there is an increasing search for Spirituality, a search for God's Grace. And how do we define Grace? It is said, justice is getting what we deserve, mercy is not getting what we deserve, but **GRACE** is getting what we don't deserve; John 1:14 says "**He came full of Grace and truth**" and Paul in the first 10 verses of Ephesians 2 records his excitement at the wonder of God's Grace and blessing. Pointing out that "**It is by Grace you are saved, through faith and not by yourselves, it is the gift of God.**" These verses alone should cause us to stop and reflect.

Spencer Burke in his book, a Heretics guide to Eternity argues that religion can often minimise or qualify the depths of God's love, he asks the tantalising question " Could it be that God's love and Grace are actually subversive?", that it finds us wherever we are. Could it be that beyond religion, conventional wisdom and reason, that the gift of Grace is something , not to be opted out of, but to be opted into, not something you get, but something you have. So many questions, but this is.... **Just a thought!**



Pass Club Oasis onto a friend



'The Word For Today'



Attitude check

**YOUR ATTITUDE SHOULD BE THE SAME AS...CHRIST JESUS
PHILIPPIANS 2:5**

Each morning you have to tell yourself, 'Today I'll do whatever is needed to keep my attitude right.' Here are some good tips:

1) realise that you're in charge of your attitude and you need to check it daily. The stronger your natural inclination to be negative or doubtful, the more you'll have to work at it. So begin each day with an attitude check. And if something is doing your head in take a deep breath and make a choice to respond in a positive way

2) ask God to help you. Someone sent us this funny prayer: 'Dear Lord, so far today I haven't gossiped, lost my temper, been greedy, grumpy, nasty, selfish or self-indulgent. But in a few minutes I'm going to have to get out of bed, then I'll need all the help I can get.' The truth is, you'll need God's help to maintain a good attitude, so ask!

3) always look for what's good. Mother Teresa had only two requirements for those working with her in Calcutta: a desire to work and a joyful attitude. Think: if somebody could be joyful amongst the dying and the poorest of the poor, surely you can too!

4) hang out with people who know God and trust Him. Your attitude is influenced by those you allow yourself to be influenced by. Don't let the media or some celebrity tell you how you should be representing yourself. Your attitude should represent your creator; not judgmental or easily wound up, but full of love and respect for others. Let God influence you today.

10 Jan 2007

See OASIS home Page to receive the Word for Today EVERY DAY

Also Click on www.ucb.co.uk to find out about Christian radio and tv

CONNECT PRAYER GROUP

Met for the first time on the 7th of Feb in Lorgues at Domaine St Marc. The focus was on Unity of hearts and minds and we looked at John 17, Jesus' prayer to his Father "**That they may be one**" and Acts 2, "**The believers gathered altogether in one place**". Amazingly there were many French people who joined us unexpectedly and others from several different backgrounds and traditions came.



In a time of open prayer and waiting on God the focus seemed clearly to pray for **France**, for its spirituality and integrity, that God's love may be known and shared throughout the nation. You might add this to your own prayers.

Connect meets on the first Wednesday of the month between 6 and 7.00 pm. Details from **Peter at 0494 739337** or **Alistair at 0674934208**

Next Oasis Mch 11th in **Lorgues**. We continue to look at what is church in "**Everything has a price**" The cost of following Jesus ! an apparent contradiction to Grace.

Infrequently Answered Question: Is the glass half empty or half full?



The pessimist replied, Half empty, what a pity it's not full, where's the other half gone?

The optimist replied, that's wonderful and certainly better than nothing.

The scientist replied; Neither. The glass would be half full of air and half full of liquid, therefore completely full.

The capitalist replied; If the glass was empty I wonder how much I could I sell it for!

Club Oasis now reaches email addresses as far away as America and New Zealand, and closer to home, the UK and Ireland. If you know anyone who might like to be added to the group email please send us their address at oasis@themasseys.fr

May the Grace of Christ our Saviour

And the Father's boundless love,
with the Holy Spirit's favour
rest upon us from above.
Thus may we abide in union
With each other and the Lord
And possess in sweet communion
Joys which earth cannot afford

Written by John Newton in the eighteenth century, and based on Corinthians 13:13, he had a passion and understanding for God's Grace that was unbounded, a passion that came from his own experience and which was immortalized in the hymn *Amazing Grace*;

The Story of John Newton



John Newton 1725-1807

"**Amazing grace**, how sweet the sound..." So begins one of the most beloved hymns of all times, a staple in the hymnals of many denominations, *New Britain* or "45 on the top" in *Sacred Harp*. The author of the words was John Newton, the self-proclaimed wretch who once was lost but then was found, saved by amazing grace. Newton was born in London July 24, 1725, the son of a commander of a merchant

ship which sailed the Mediterranean. When John was eleven, he went to sea with his father and made six voyages with him before the elder Newton retired. In 1744 John was impressed into service on a man-of-war, the *H. M. S. Harwich*. Finding conditions on board intolerable, he deserted but was soon recaptured and publicly flogged and demoted from midshipman to common seaman.

Finally at his own request he was exchanged into service on a slave ship, which took him to the coast of Sierra Leone. He then became the servant of a slave trader and was brutally abused. Early in 1748 he was rescued by a sea captain who had known John's father. John Newton ultimately became captain of his own ship, one which plied the slave trade.

Although he had had some early religious instruction from his mother, who had died when he was a child, he had long since given up any religious convictions. However, on a homeward voyage, while he was attempting to steer the ship through a violent storm, he experienced what he was to refer to later as his "great deliverance." He recorded in his journal that when all seemed lost and the ship would surely sink, he exclaimed, "Lord, have mercy upon us." Later in his cabin he reflected on what he had said and began to believe that God had addressed him through the storm and that grace had begun to work for him.

For the rest of his life he observed the anniversary of May 10, 1748 as the day of his conversion, a day of humiliation in which he subjected his will to a higher power. "Thro' many dangers, toils and snares, I have already come; 'tis grace has bro't me safe thus far, and grace will lead me home." He continued in the slave trade for a time after his conversion; however, he saw to it that the slaves under his care were treated humanely.

In 1750 he married Mary Catlett, with whom he had been in love for many years. By 1755, after a serious illness, he had given up seafaring forever. During his days as a sailor he had begun to educate himself, teaching himself Latin, among other subjects. From 1755 to 1760 Newton was surveyor of tides at Liverpool, where he came to know George Whitefield, deacon in the Church of England, evangelistic preacher, and leader of the Calvinistic Methodist Church. Newton became Whitefield's enthusiastic disciple. During this period Newton also met and came to admire John Wesley, founder of Methodism. Newton's self-education continued, and he learned Greek and Hebrew.

He decided to become a minister and applied to the Archbishop of York for ordination. The Archbishop refused his request, but Newton persisted in his goal, and he was subsequently ordained by the Bishop of Lincoln and accepted the curacy of Olney, Buckinghamshire. Newton's church became so crowded during services that it had to be enlarged. He preached not only in Olney but in other parts of the country. In 1767 the poet William Cowper settled at Olney, and he and Newton became friends.

The work goes on. Feb 18th Amazing Grace Sunday

CLICK ON LINK OR COPY INTO ADDRESS BAR AND ALLOW TIME FOR IT TO LOAD; Click on black square

<http://www.amazinggracesunday.com/>

The Invitation

I shook my head in disbelief. This couldn't be the right place. After all, I couldn't possibly be welcome here. I had been given an invitation several times, by several different people, and had finally decided to see what this place was all about. But, this just couldn't be the right place. Quickly, I glanced down at the invitation that I clutched in my hand. I scanned past the words, "*Come as you are. No jacket required,*" and found the location.

Yes, I was at the right place. I peered through the window again and saw a room of people whose faces seemed to glow with joy. All were neatly dressed, adorned in fine garments and appeared strangely clean as they dined at this exquisite restaurant.

Ashamed, I looked down at my own tattered and torn clothing, covered in stains. I was dirty, in fact, filthy. A foul smell seemed to consume me and I couldn't shake the grime that clung to my body. As I turned around to leave, the words from the invitation seemed to leap

out at me, "***Come as you are. No jacket required.***"

I decided to give it a shot. Mustering up every bit of courage I could find, I opened the door to this restaurant and walked up to a man standing behind a podium.

"Your name, sir?" he asked me with a smile. "Jimmy D. Brown," I mumbled without looking up. I thrust my hands deep into my pockets, hoping to conceal their stains. He didn't seem to notice the filth that I was covered in and he continued, "Very good, sir. **A table is reserved in your name.** Would you like to be seated?" I couldn't believe what I heard! A grin broke out on my face and I said, "Yes, of course!"

He led me to a table and, sure enough, there was a placard with my name written on it in a deep, dark red.

As I browsed over a menu, I saw many delightful items listed. There were things like, "peace," "joy," "blessings," "confidence," "assurance," "hope," "love," "faith," and "mercy." I realized that this was no ordinary restaurant! I flipped the menu back to the front in order to see where I was at. "God's Grace," was the name of this place!

The man returned and said, "I recommend the 'Special of the Day.' With it, you are entitled to heaping portions of everything on this menu."

You've got to be kidding! I thought to myself. You mean, I can have ALL of this!

"What is the 'Special of the Day,' I asked with excitement ringing in my voice. "Salvation," was his reply.

"I'll take it," I practically cried out. Then, as quickly as I made that statement, the joy left my body. A sick, painful ache jerked through my stomach and tears filled my eyes. Between my sobs I said, "Mister, look at me. I'm dirty and nasty. I'm unclean and unworthy of such things. I'd love to have all of this, but, but, I just can't afford it."

Undaunted, the man smiled again. "**Sir, your check has already been taken care of by that Gentleman over there,**" he said pointing to the front of the room. "**His Name is Jesus.**"

Turning, I saw a man whose very presence seemed to light the room. He was almost too much to look at. I found myself walking towards Him and in shaking voice I whispered, "Sir, I'll wash the dishes or sweep the floors or take out the trash. I'll do anything I can do to repay you for all of this."

He opened His arms and said with a smile, "Son, all of this is yours if you just come to Me. Ask Me to clean you up and I will. Ask Me to take away the stains and it is done. Ask Me to allow you to feast at My table and you will eat. Remember, the table is reserved in your name. All you need do is accept this gift that I offer you."

Truly, this is Amazing Grace