

NOTES FOR SMALL COMMUNITY AND INDIVIDUAL USE

INTRODUCTION

This talk is part one of three – please listen to them all: <https://www.ccweb.org.uk/Media/AllMedia.aspx>

As I mentioned last week, I intentionally produced more material than I imagined would be digestible in a single session – and am aware that many groups and individuals are going to continue to work through last week's notes (available at <https://www.ccweb.org.uk/Publisher/File.aspx?ID=244968>).

Do continue to work through the scripture, questions and food for thought there.

A reminder of key dates:

March 8 & 15	Sunday Teaching – at the 8, the 10 & the 5
March 11 & 18	Wednesday Teaching – at the 11
Saturday March 28	Open Meeting to look at plans and ask Questions (10.00 am to 12.00 noon)
Monday March 30	Open Meeting to look at plans and ask Questions (7.30 – 9.30 pm)
Monday 6 April	Church Family Prayer Meeting – 7.45 pm

**** Sunday 26 April – our Annual Church Meeting at 10.00 am ****

We are asking all church family members to make every effort to join us for this very special Gathering, at which our pledges and gifts will be made as part of our act of worship

READINGS for Sunday 8 March: Exodus 33:18 & 34:5-7 / Matthew 9:35-38

MAIN POINTS OF THE TALK

I explained the scope of the works we are planning to begin in July – please note that this phase is concerned with the Refurbishment and further opening up of our present Crypt, and accompanying works to refurbish the foyer. The next phase – for which we are still working hard to resolve planning issues – will be the Extension to the north of the Crypt.

We aim to raise the necessary funds for the Refurbishment phase from within the church family – and will look to external funding for the Extension phase.

It's tempting to think that this is all about bricks and mortar, lifts and loos, facilities and furnishings, heating and light. In fact, it's all about people and the legacy that you and I can weave into the lives of those we meet ... and those we never will; because we in our generation responded with vision, faith and generosity to create a space in which people can meet the God of compassion.

Much of what we already do in and through the Crypt – and what we long to do even more fully with our new facilities, is called Social Prescribing. We watched the first of a new series of short films produced by Christian Action Bristol under the banner 'Hope on Film'. You can watch it here: <https://www.christianactionbristol.org.uk/hopeonfilm-socialprescribing> (the relevant section runs to 1:57)

Next week, at all our Gatherings, our Project Brochure will be available, giving more details on the plans and how you and I can step up and say, 'I'm in.' Together, we can transform our space for the mission of the God of compassion.

FOR FURTHER THOUGHT

You may like to think about – and share – memories of a place or building that was significant in your own faith journey, or at a time of life when you needed help.

You may like to think about – and share – memories of ways in which the present Crypt has served you in your spiritual journey or at a time of need.

SCRIPTURE

Jesus tells us not to be anxious.

²⁵ 'Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes?' ²⁶ Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? ²⁷ Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life? ²⁸ And why do you worry about clothes? See how the flowers of the field grow. They do not labour or spin. ²⁹ Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendour was dressed like one of these. ³⁰ If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you – you of little faith? ³¹ So do not worry, saying, "What shall we eat?" or "What shall we drink?" or "What shall we wear?" ³² For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. ³³ But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Matthew 6:25-33

In this passage, we see that freedom from anxiety is characterized by 3 inner attitudes to life:

- what we have we acknowledge as a gift
- what we need will be provided by God
- what we have is available to others

Next week, we will consider how we can become 'rich towards God' (Luke 12:21) and 'excel in the grace of giving' (2 Corinthians 8:7). You may like to look at these passages in advance.

QUESTIONS (adapted from Tim Keller and Randy Alcorn)

As I continue to realise that Jesus gave everything by his death on the cross to buy me back for himself, in what ways is he calling me to surrender myself to him? This is a far bigger question than simply financial giving. St Paul writes

I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God – this is your true and proper worship. Romans 12:1

Is the undying and unconditional love of Jesus my true treasure, or do I actually treasure other things more? How does my use of money, time & gifts indicate what and where my true treasure is? If my ultimate treasure is in the world to come rather than this present world, what could I give up here to store up there?

If an outside were to look at how I use my time, my energy and my resources, what would they learn about my priorities?

Five minutes after I die, what will I wish I had given away while I had the chance?