

## Mind Your Language

It is important that we avoid taking God's name in vain by apportioning words to him that he has clearly not said.

In a 'Christianity' magazine article, RT Kendal, the former Minister of Westminster Chapel warned of breaking the third commandment : 'You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God, for the Lord will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name' (Exodus 20:7).

How might we do this? by claiming the authority for a certain course of action on the basis of 'God told me' without first checking it out with scripture and wise and godly leaders. Without denying that God does speak to us, we must be careful as to how we communicate that to others.

RT Kendal wrote:

'One of the hardest habits for some of us to break is saying: 'The Lord told me this' or 'Here is what the Lord showed me'.

He maintains that to use this kind of authoritative language without first submitting our thoughts and promptings to our 'spiritual fathers or mothers' is an attempt to quench any hint of dissent. It claims authority because the individual fears that otherwise they would not be listened to and therefore removes the possibility of discussion or mutual enquiry or even the suggestion that they might have got it wrong.

A better use of language would be to submit this word of guidance before others and say, 'I think the Lord might be saying....would you pray about this with me?' This tone of language reflects a humility of spirit and a desire to truly hear what God is saying aware that we might be prone to just hearing what **we** want God to say.

## Jesus the Good Shepherd

When Jesus describes himself as the Good Shepherd he talks about his sheep knowing him and listening to his voice (John 10:16). As we grow in our faith and love for Jesus so we can learn to identify the Shepherd's voice as he speaks to us. This doesn't necessarily happen over night, but over a life time. As we humbly work out in fellowship with others what God might be saying to us, so we can move on into all that he is leading us.

Friends, during this season of Lent, may we practise the presence of God more intentionally in our daily routines, so that we can more fully hear Him, be guided by Him and share with others what we feel God may be saying to us.

In Christ

Stephen

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*building bridges*

## Vicar's Letter - March 2010

### Dear friends

Learning to hear from God is something with which many Christians struggle. We have no problem in talking to God but listening for his answers and learning to discern his voice doesn't always come easily to us. Let's make a few comments before we unpack this:

**1. God does speak.** In the Old Testament book of Job, Job declares that even in the midst of his suffering and struggles God still speaks.

'For God does speak - now one way, now another - though men may not perceive it' (Job 33:14)

The Book of Genesis declares that God brought Creation into being 'by a word'. He spoke and it was so. Throughout the Bible God speaks to individuals - prophets priests and kings.

**2. God can speak to anyone he chooses.** Hearing God speak is no indication that we are unusually spiritual or mature or important. In the book of Numbers, God uses a donkey to speak to Balaam. Similarly God can use any manner of means at his disposal to speak to us.

**3. God speaks not only to us but through us.** Scripture is full of accounts of God's message being spoken through people even if the speaker was unaware of it. From Moses to Paul, God often said, 'I will be with your mouth and teach you what you are to speak'. Jesus promised his followers that in times of persecution they could trust that the 'Holy Spirit will teach you at that very hour what you ought to say'. God can speak to us through something said 'in passing' which can just settle on our hearts and we know that was a word from God.

**4. God can speak to us and our thoughts may be guided by him without our knowing that it is God's guidance.** This happened to Samuel when he was a boy. God spoke to him directly one night but he did not realise it was God speaking. Samuel needed the help of Eli the priest to learn to recognize the voice of God.

**5. God uses other people to help us identify what he is saying** and to provide a check and balance that what we understand as being from God does in fact tally with scripture and the wisdom and experience of mature Christian friends. This is why it is so important to submit what we feel God may be saying to others who are wise in faith in order to help us understand accurately.

## What's On in March 2010

### WEEKLY @ Holy Trinity

<b>Sundays</b>	<b>8.15 am</b>	<b>Holy Communion BCP</b>	
<b>Mon, Wed, Thur,</b>	<b>9.00am</b>	<b>Prayer for the church</b>	<b>Crèche</b>
<b>Mondays</b>	<b>9.15 am</b>	<b>Sanctuary</b>	<b>Room 2</b>
	<b>6.30 pm</b>	<b>United ages 11-15</b>	See Emma Ash for details
<b>Wednesdays</b>	<b>10.00 am</b>	<b>Coffee Morning</b>	<b>Room 4</b>
	<b>10.30 am</b>	<b>Holy Communion</b>	<b>Room 2</b>
	<b>7.30 pm</b>	<b>Cell Groups meet</b>	<b>local areas</b>
<b>Thursdays</b>	<b>10.15 am</b>	<b>Smarties</b>	<b>Church Hall</b>
	<b>7.30 pm</b>	<b>Cell Groups meet</b>	<b>local areas</b>
	<b>7.30 pm</b>	<b>Youth Cell Group 15+</b>	See Emma Ash for details

Monday	1	9.00am	Open the Book @ Mitton Manor School Lynn Satchell speaking at Sanctuary
Tuesday	2	Lunch time	<b>Activ8</b> C of E Sch/ <b>CU Y 7-9</b> Tewkesbury Sch
		7.30pm	HART Prayer Meeting—28 Graylag Crescent
Wednesday	3	Lunch time	CU Y 10-13 @ Tewkesbury School
		4.00pm	The Art of Connecting @ Church Office
		7.30pm	Alpha - How does God guide us?
Thursday	4	9.00am	Assembly @ Mitton Manor School
		12.40pm	Activ8 @ Queen Margaret School
Saturday	6	9.00am	Healing on the Streets
		From 1.00pm	Get it Together!
Sunday	7	10.00am	Morning Worship - John Coles
Monday	8	10.00am	Assembly @ John Moore School
		7.45pm	PCC Meeting
Tuesday	9	Lunch time	<b>Activ8</b> C of E School/ <b>CU Y 7-9</b> Tewkesbury Sch
Wednesday	10	Lunch time	CU Y 10-13 @ Tewkesbury School

## What's On in March 2010

Wednesday	10	4.00pm	The Art of Connecting @ Church Office
		7.30pm	Alpha - Who is the Holy Spirit?
Thursday	11	9.00am	Assembly @ Queen Margaret School
		12.40pm	Activ8 @ Queen Margaret School
		2.00pm	Q & A @ Tewkesbury C of E School - Lynn
Sunday	14	10.00am	Mothering Sunday—All Age Worship
		6.30pm	5-6-5 Service
Monday	15	9.00am	Open the Book @ Mitton Manor
Tuesday	16	Lunch time	<b>Activ8</b> C of E Sch/ <b>CU Y 7-9</b> Tewkesbury Sch
Wednesday	17	Lunch time	CU Y 10-13 @ Tewkesbury School
		4.00pm	The Art of Connecting @ Church Office
		7.30pm	Alpha - What does the Holy Spirit do?
Thursday	18	Lunch time	Activ8 @ Queen Margaret School
		7.30pm	Prayer Gathering at Church
Friday	19	9.00am	Lynn taking RE lesson @ Mitton Manor School
Sunday	21	10.00am	Morning Worship
		3.00pm	Sunday @ 3
Tuesday	23	Lunch time	<b>Activ8</b> C of E Sch/ <b>CU Y 7-9</b> Tewkesbury Sch
Wednesday	24	Lunch time	CU Y10-13 @ Tewkesbury School
		7.30pm	Alpha - How can I be filled with the Holy Spirit?
Thursday	25	10.00am	<b>Assembly</b> Tirlbrook Sch/ <b>Activ8</b> Q.Marg Sch
Saturday	27	All Day	Alpha - Holy Spirit Away Day
Sunday	28	10.00am	Palm Sunday - Holy Communion
		2.30pm	Wheatpieces Craft Event
Monday/ Tuesday	29/ 30	9.30am/ 1.30pm	Experience Easter - Mitton Manor School & Tewkesbury C of E School
Wednesday	31	9.00am	Assembly @ Queen Margaret School