

N is for Naaman

Naaman was an important man, a successful commander of the Syrian army but he had a terrible skin disease.

His wife had a little Israelite servant girl who trusted the living God. She said to her mistress, "I wish my master could go to the prophet back in my country. He would be able to make him better."

When Naaman heard about this he told the King of Syria. The King said, "Go to the King of Israel and take this letter." The letter told the King of Israel about Naaman and asked him to cure his disease.

Naaman also took lots of silver, gold and many fine clothes to give to the king. When the King of Israel read the letter he was very distressed, "How can I cure this man? Am I God with the power over life and death?" he said. "I know the King of Syria is trying to start a quarrel with me." But the prophet Elisha heard about what had happened and sent a message to the King, "Tell Naaman to come and see me," Elisha said.

So Naaman went with his chariot and horses and stopped at Elisha's house. Elisha sent his servant out to tell Naaman to go and wash 7 times in the River Jordan and he would be better.

Naaman thought he was far too important to wash in the dirty river Jordan. He thought Elisha would at least come to see him and wave his arms and pray to the LORD his God.

So he left the house in a rage.

How does the story end?



You can read it for yourself in the Bible in the book of 2 Kings Chapter 5. (Note there's a clue in the picture!)

What is the way ahead?

Where do we go from here?

Teresa May has failed to deliver Brexit and is stepping down as party leader and Prime Minister. The two main parties suffered badly in the EU elections, while the Brexit party and the anti-Brexit parties both did well.

The situation looks hopeless, after all, the next leader, whoever they are, is only human, the party has no majority and they are split over Brexit.

During the second world war there were hopeless situations and days of prayer were called by King George VI, and some remarkable deliverances followed.

The Bible says, "If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and he will give it to him." (James 1:5)

And an old hymn also says: "When we reach the end of our hoarded resources, Our Father's full giving is only begun."

Having come to the end of our own resources, and in a hopeless situation, would it not be sensible to ask God

for his wisdom?

You and I cannot call a national day of prayer but we can pray individually and as churches for those in authority over us (as the Bible commands to do).

Pray for godly wisdom to be given to our leaders that we may be governed well.

But there is a higher category of problem that we all need to face up to. Jim Reeves sang the song (written by his wife): "This world is not my home I'm just a passing through".

It is important that we are governed well, but there is more to life than that; there is eternity to face.

The same God who is willing to give us wisdom, can also give us eternal life. That greatest gift is obtained by admitting our need for forgiveness and trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ who died to take the punishment for all our wrongs.

Our Christianity Explored course (see page 3) is a way of finding out more about that wonderful gift.



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Insight

- Issued four times a year
- To keep you informed
- To stimulate thought
- To invite you to our events

Market Overton Free Church

is an independently governed church and a member of the FIEC



What are you growing?



I received a rather exotic collection of plant seeds as a gift: it included purple carrots, stripped tomatoes, yellow courgettes, and red brussel sprouts.

The seeds were duly sown and resultant seedlings

were first thinned and then planted out. Because of the unusual colours, my harvest may end up being photographed rather than eaten.

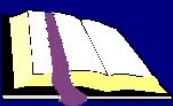
The process reminds me of one of the lesser-known parables of Jesus: *"This is what the kingdom of God is like. A man scatters seed on the ground. Night and day, whether he sleeps or gets up, the seed sprouts and grows, though he does not know how. All by itself the soil produces grain - first the stalk, then the head, then the full kernel in the head. As soon as the grain is ripe, he puts the*

sickle to it, because the harvest has come." (Mark chapter 4 verses 26-29)

The lesson of the parable is about the certainty of growth. Once sown, the seeds grow independently of the farmer's sleeping or rising, or of his botanical knowledge. The soil produces grain *"all by itself,"* and the plants progress through successive stages, without input from the farmer. After sowing, he doesn't do anything until reaping. So too with God's kingdom: If we have life from God in our lives it will grow into something – gradually but certainly. Lack of growth and development is evidence of the absence of life.

Life from God will produce the sort of fruit God is looking for – a Christlike life consisting of humility, selflessness and love. Is your life producing such a crop?

Peter Rush



Market Overton
Free Church

Sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ

Minister:
Rev. Peter Rush

Elder:
Roy Palframan

Deacons:
Jon Matthews
Tim Perkins

Phone:
01572 767383

Email:
insight@mofc.org.uk

Website:
www.mofc.org.uk

Diary Dates:

Morning Worship - Every Sunday including Easter Sunday, 21 April 10.30am MO Village Hall - suitable for all.

Evening Worship - Every Sunday 6.30pm Edmondthorpe except for **All Age Service** 4.30pm on 23 Jun, in Cottesmore Village Hall and Sunday, 25 August 4.30pm "Hymns and Hotdogs" MO Village Hall

Midweek meeting - Most Thursdays, 7.30pm MO Village Hall (but check website)

Coffee Hour - Friday, 10.30am: 14 June, 12 July (none in August) MO Village Hall

Impressions of a newcomer

Hi! My name is Peter. After many years teaching English in various universities around the world, for the last 12 years in the United Arab Emirates, my wife Teresa and I moved back to her birthplace, Castle Bytham, last summer. We have two grown-up children, a daughter in Peru and a son in Leeds and we are 'sort of' retired but now working on various writing projects.

I was asked if I would write down some of my impressions of Market Overton Free Church since I first showed up last summer. Here they are:

Preaching: Peter Rush's preaching presents the words of God in their proper context and draws on a wealth of commentators. These help me 'get' what God is saying and how to apply it to myself and my circumstances.

Singing: Another way in which we may let the word of Christ 'dwell in us richly' is (as Colossians 3:16 exhorts) in 'singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in our hearts to God'. I enjoy the rich poetic and musical heritage from past saints in the hymns and choruses we sing.

Prayer: To judge from the prayers at the Sunday meetings, people are depending on God. They faithfully pray for one another's needs and the spread of the gospel.



My son-in-law, Samuel, visiting from Peru last summer, attended the church's mid-week meeting and he was very much blessed and encouraged that people wanted to pray for him. Hearing the prayers of others encourages me to pray.

Service: I am impressed by the dedication of the musicians, the greeters, the chair setters and stackers, the tea-makers, and all the other unseen workers who contribute to the functioning of the church body.

Thank you all for encouraging and serving this individual in his walk with God!

Peter Crompton



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