

Leominster Baptist Church



Good Soil

We, for a brief moment, were blessed to be surrounded by Christmas cheer! But once the 1st of January comes, we put away the decorations and its all change for the new year.

A few days ago, I read the parable of the Sower in Matthew chapter 13. This is one of those passages that makes a great lesson for children but also packs quite a punch for adults. Jesus speaks of a farmer who is sowing seed. The seed falls on four different kinds of soil: hard-packed ground, rocky soil, soil that is filled with thorns, and fertile soil. Jesus goes on to explain that the seed is the Word of God, and the soil represents the condition of our hearts. While it may be a bit simplistic, here is how I would describe the heart conditions represented by the four soil types.

Hard heart – basically resistant to Jesus and his teaching.

Rocky soil – a lack of spiritual depth, often the result of issues we don't want to face.

Thorny soil – the overly busy or distracted life, caused by many factors (including many church related or christian activities).

While we feel like the new year represents change the fact is that the one thing that doesn't change from year to year is us. As the new year rolls around, life goes back to normal, and we soon find ourselves back where we were. The point of the parable is that the only hope for change, renewal or direction is for God's word to be given time to produce these things in us. In order to change we need to let God's word do its work. For it to do its work we have to be receptive to it and we have to give it time to do so.

Many of us may have started a bible reading plan this year. The only problem with these plans is that they often rush us on to the next passage without enough time to let what we have just read take root. We are meant to sit with God's word, chew it over, ask questions of it and of ourselves. We are meant to carry it with us and let it hang around us.

So what should we do? Should we make a conscious decision to soften what is hard, go after spiritual depth, declutter our lives so we can have greater focus? The parable doesn't tell us. The reason for this is that the parables are not meant to be fables with lessons for us to learn and go away and change by ourselves. Instead, they are meant to lead us back to Jesus himself to ask "What do you want me to do with this?" They are designed to make us come back to him and hang around long enough for him to work in us.

If we can keep seeking, keep listening and keep coming back to Jesus then, even if nothing changes, we will have what we need for this year and by the end of the year will have been changed by being with him.

Coming Up...



Discipleship Sessions 15th & 22nd Jan 6pm

For our discipleship sessions this month we will be looking at how we read and understand parts of the Old Testament. From weird laws to strange stories we will explore how these are relevant to us as disciples of Jesus.



Annual Church Meeting 25th January 7:30pm

Meeting for members of LBC .



Churches Together Prayer Evening 24th January 7:30pm

From 23rd-27th January there is a week of prayer among churches in Leominster. As part of this we will be hosting a prayer meeting on the Tuesday to pray for Church Unity and our witness in the town.

Teams, Rota's and Volunteers

As the Gospel of John tells it, six days before Passover, Jesus was in Bethany at the house of his friend Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. A woman named Mary takes a jar of costly perfumed oil and anoints the feet of the reclining Jesus. She dries his feet with her hair but Judas Iscariot objects to the act. "Why was this perfume not sold for three hundred denarii and the money given to the poor?" Judas asks. Though 300 denarii was the annual wage of a labourer, Jesus told Judas to leave her alone, and foreshadowing his fate, said the anointing would be useful for his burial, and besides, "you always have the poor with you" – but Jesus would not always be there. While this event has been retold because of the beauty and extravagance of the act, what often gets overlooked in this passage is the small detail that Jesus and the community around him was supported and funded by a common purse and contributions of others.

We don't know what this support looked like or how it worked out but it is interesting to note that Jesus' ministry required the support of others. In church communities today this is still true. While many roles and actions go unnoticed the church simply wouldn't function or fulfil its call to love God, love one another and witness to the world without the time, energy and financial support of many, many unsung heroes.

A non-exhaustive list of teams and roles include maintaining the building, running the sound desk, welcoming people, serving in the kitchen, setting up rooms and toys for groups, preparing tea and coffee, providing food, organising meals, looking after children in creche and other groups, caring for church grounds, turning up early, staying on late, turning up to meetings, visiting people, praying, giving and numerous supporting roles in many ministries..

There are two things we wanted to say in regard to this. First, THANK YOU! We are so grateful for those who give what they can to support the ministry of LBC. The part that each person doesn't just mean that the programmes and activities can run but that the church can be a family, caring for one another and serving the people around us.

Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ...Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.
1 Corinthians 12:12,27

While the part you may play may go unnoticed we pray that you would know the value and importance that God places on each of us playing our part. Just as with Mary it is us who are concerned with measuring how much and how big our service is. Jesus is delighted at the heart of the one who serves him.

Second, if you are new to LBC we invite you to explore what part God may have for you as part of the body. We aren't into coercing or forcing people to step up but believe each should give what they decide in their heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. (2 Corinthians 9:7) This applies to more than finances; it is about an attitude of service, joy and participating with God and his people in the work he has given us to do. LBC has survived on the beautiful faithfulness and generosity of his people for many years and we pray this may continue for many more.

New to LBC...

If you have joined us recently then we would love to get in touch for a chat and help answer any questions you might have. You can get in touch in the following ways:

- Email us at contact@leobc.com
- Call us on 07480 065135
- Fill in a card at the welcome desk in the church foyer.

We look forward to hearing from you.

CAPERWRAY VISIT

For a number of years now we have had a group of students visit us from Capernwray Bible School which is located in Lancashire. They come to help out with the ministries of the church, visit local schools and participate in outreach activities. It is a chance for them to see in practice what they have been studying in classes. Last year their visit was cut short as they caught Covid and had to return home. This year we have 5 students joining us and they will be with us from 24th February-4th March. If you are able to help with hosting a student during this time please speak to Dean or Jeremy, likewise if you are able to help with providing meals for the students while they are with us please let us know. There will also be a church meal after the service on 25th to welcome them.

January 2023

December 2022							January 2023							February 2023						
M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
12	13	14	15	16	17	18	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
19	20	21	22	23	24	25	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
26	27	28	29	30	31		23	24	25	26	27	28	29	27	28					
							30	31												

- Community/ Other Groups
- Prayer Gatherings
- Circles (Small Groups)
- Youth & Family
- LBC Ministries
- Connected Ministries

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Christmas holidays						
26 10:00 Prayer Gathering	27 11:00 Food Bank	28 14:00 Food Share	29 19:30 Music group rehearsal	30 11:00 Food Bank	31 14:00 Food Share	1 10:00 Pre-Service 10:30 Morning Service 18:00 Prayer Service
9 10:00 Prayer Gathering	10 08:45 DB Circle- Team Refresh 11:00 Food Bank 19:30 JS Circle	11 10:00 Sunbeams meeting 10:00 Online Prayer Gathering 14:00 Food Share	12 10:30 CR Circle- Thirsty Ladies 19:00 A.A. 19:30 Music group rehearsal	13 09:00 Market Stall Witness 10:30 RG Circle- Shed Men 11:00 Food Bank	14 14:00 Food Share	15 10:00 Pre-Service Prayer 10:30 Morning Service 18:00 Discipleship Session 1
16 10:00 Prayer Gathering	17 08:45 DB Circle- Team 10:30 Job Club 11:00 Food Bank 13:30 Circle - MG and 3 more...	18 09:30 Sunbeams 10:00 Online Prayer Gathering 12:30 Service for Beryl 14:00 Food Share	19 10:30 CR Circle- Thirsty Ladies 19:00 A.A. 19:30 Music group rehearsal	20 10:30 RG Circle- Shed Men 11:00 Food Bank 17:30 NGage 19:30 Nergize	21 14:00 Food Share	22 10:00 Pre-Service 10:30 Morning Service 18:00 Discipleship 19:30 College+ 20:00 Refresh
23 09:30 MG Circle 10:00 Prayer Gathering 14:45 Fellowship Group	24 11:00 Food Bank 13:30 Circle - MG 15:00 Sunbeams Setup 19:30 Churches Together in Leominster	25 09:30 Sunbeams 10:00 Online Prayer 14:00 Food Share 19:30 SW Circle and 2 more...	26 10:30 CR Circle- Thirsty Ladies 19:00 A.A. 19:30 Music group rehearsal	27 10:30 Coffee Morning 11:00 Food Bank 17:30 NGage 19:30 Nergize	28 14:00 Food Share	29 10:00 Pre-Service Prayer 10:30 Morning Service 18:00 Missionary Update
30 10:00 Prayer Gathering	31 11:00 Food Bank 13:30 Circle - MG 15:00 Sunbeams Setup	1 09:30 Sunbeams 10:00 Online Prayer Gathering 14:00 Food Share	2 10:30 CR Circle- Capernwray 19:00 A.A. 19:30 Persecuted 19:30 Music group rehearsal	3 09:00 Market Stall Witness 10:30 RG Circle- Shed 11:00 Food Bank 17:30 NGage 19:30 Nergize	4 14:00 Food Share	5 10:00 Pre-Service Prayer 10:30 Morning Service 18:00 Prayer Service 19:30 College+