

7. The things He carried...the hopes of God
p.39 – 45

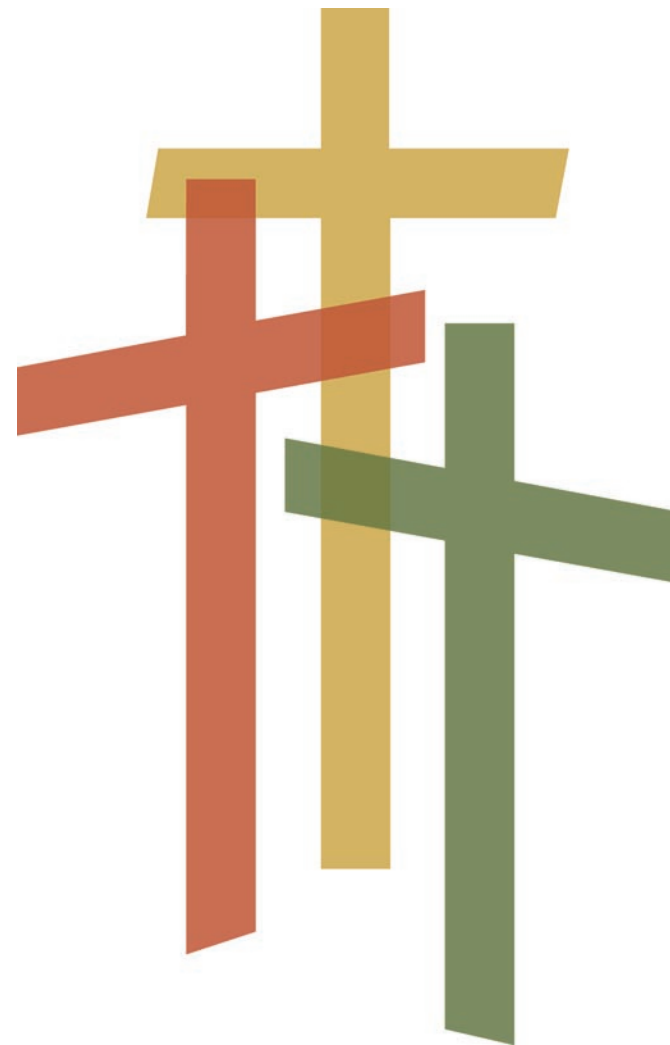
Café Church 3rd April 7p.m.

- Bible passage: Mark 12:1-12
- Think about vocation - how does this apply to you?
- Pray for each other

8. The things He carried...The sins of the World
p.49 - 54

Café Church 17th April 7p.m.

- Bible passage: Romans 5:1-11
- Read the first two paragraphs on p.49 again.
How do you feel?
- Pray for Passion in the Park (Friday 22nd April in
Elmhurst Park)
- Take time for a social, to enjoy being together, who can
you invite to join you?



St John's Lent Course 2011

6. The things He carried...a broken heart

Meditation in Church:

Good Friday 22nd April 2 p.m.

- Read through chapter allowing time to be quiet (p.65-71).
- Use some or all of reflection section
- Bible passage: John 19:28-37
- Take time to stay at Good Friday – Easter Sunday's coming but don't get there too soon. Think about the darkness, the loss of hope, the total despair.
- Think - what in this series has helped you most or helped you understand more fully?
- Pray using prayer on p.77

5. The things He carried...our sorrows

Sermons in Church:

Maundy Thursday 21st April 10 a.m. and 7.30 p.m.

- Read through chapter allowing time to be quiet (p.57-60).
- Use some or all of reflection section
- Bible passages: Romans 8:18-39 and John 13:1-17
- Symbolically wash each other's feet (or hands). Use quality soap, a soft towel and massage with moisturising cream. Meditate quietly as you do this.
- Sing *The Servant King* (Mission Praise 162)
- Application – take time out this week to listen to someone's worries and sorrows.
- "Lord Jesus, the women of Jerusalem wept for you, move us to tears at the plight of the broken in our world..." (from liturgy for Stations of the Cross)

Traditionally Lent is a time of self-examination, penitence, self-denial, study and preparation for Easter. Extending over forty days it reminds us of Jesus' time in the wilderness and testing by Satan.

This year we are using Stephen Cottrell's book, "The Things He Carried" as a resource to help us make the journey through Lent and Holy Week to Easter. Sermons in Church will follow the series and it is hoped that small groups will use the book and, if they wish, these accompanying notes to dig deeper. Each group is being given one copy of the book – if further copies are required (it would be helpful for each member of the group to have their own copy) the ordering details are SPCK 2008 ISBN 978-0-281-06080-1. The cost is £4.84 per copy from Amazon, slightly more from bookshops.

Some weeks the sermons in church will not follow the series (3rd April - Mothering Sunday; 10th April – Combined service, AGM and lunch; 17th April – Palm Sunday). There are two undated sessions, ...the sins of the World and ...the hopes of God at the end of this booklet which could be used these weeks still leaving space for a social.

Preparation

It is suggested that the person leading takes time to read through the relevant chapter and section marked, "For reflection" before the meeting – chapters are short as the whole book is less than eighty pages. Decide which parts of the reflection section will be helpful to your group and please note that some weeks the suggestion is made that people bring a piece of wood, piece of cloth or some other item with them – this will need to be mentioned the week before.

1. The things He carried...the cross

Sermons in Church:

Ash Wednesday, 9th March, 10 a.m. and 7.30 p.m.

- could you suggest that your small group comes to this together?

- Read through chapter allowing time to be quiet (p.3-8)
- Use some or all of the reflection section.
- Bible passage: Mark 15:6-15

The following may also be helpful:

The Three Trees

Once upon a mountain top, three little trees stood and dreamed of what they wanted to become when they grew up. The first little tree looked up at the stars and said, "I want to hold treasure. I want to be covered with gold and filled with precious stones. I'll be the most beautiful treasure chest in the world." The second little tree looked out at the small stream trickling by on its way to the ocean. "I want to be travelling mighty waters and carrying powerful kings. I'll be the strongest ship in the world." The third little tree looked down into the valley below where busy men and women worked in a busy town. "I don't want to leave the mountain top at all. I want to grow so tall that when people stop to look at me they'll raise their eyes to heaven and think of God. I will be the tallest tree in the world."

Years passed. The rain came, the sun shone and the little trees grew tall. One day three wood cutters climbed the mountain. The first wood cutter looked at the first tree and said, "This tree is beautiful, it's perfect for me." With a swoop of his shining axe the first tree fell. "Now I shall be a beautiful chest to hold wonderful treasure" said the first tree. The second wood cutter looked at the second tree and said, "This tree is strong, it's perfect for me." With a swoop of his shining axe the second

4. The things He carried...His followers' disappointments

Sermons in Church: 9 a.m. and 11 a.m. Sunday 27th March

- Read through chapter allowing time to be quiet (p.31-35).
- Use some or all of reflection section
- Bible passage: Mark 9:30-37

- Share honestly about disappointments in your life and about how you have overcome them (if you have). If this is something you are still working through maybe other members of the group can help you.

- How do you think Jesus' mother felt?

- Application – go to Café Church on 27th March to hear Dave's talk on, "How to deal with disappointment."

- Pray for each other.

3. The things He carried...a seamless robe

Sermons in Church: 9 a.m. and 11 a.m. Sunday 20th March

- Read through chapter allowing time to be quiet (p.23-26).
- Use some or all of the reflection section
- Bible passage: John 19:23-25
- Do you treasure a piece of clothing? If so, what and why? What other things do you treasure? And how would you feel if they were taken from you?
- Count your blessings – how many coats ... jackets ...shoes ...jumpers/cardigans do you have?
- Application – go to a charity shop
- Pray for issues that have arisen today.

tree fell. “Now I shall be a strong ship sailing the mighty seas carrying powerful kings” said the second tree.

The third tree felt her heart sink when the third wood cutter looked her way. She stood straight and tall and pointed bravely to heaven but the wood cutter never even looked up. “Any kind of tree will do for me” he muttered as, with a swoop of his shining axe, the third tree fell.

The first tree rejoiced when the wood cutter took her to a carpenter’s shop but the carpenter fashioned her into a feed box for animals. The once beautiful tree was not covered with gold or filled with treasure – she was coated with sawdust and filled with hay for the farm animals. The second tree smiled when the wood cutter took her to a shipyard but no mighty sailing ship was made that day, instead she was hammered and awed into a simple fishing boat. She was too small and weak to sail an ocean, or even a river, instead she was taken to a small lake. The third tree was confused when the wood cutter cut her into strong beams and left her in the woodyard. “What happened?” The once tall tree wondered, “all I ever wanted was to stay on the mountain top and to point to God.”

Many days and nights passed. The three trees nearly forgot their dreams. But one night golden starlight poured over the first tree as a young woman placed her newborn baby in the feedbox. “I wish I could make a cradle for him” her husband whispered. The mother squeezed his hand and smiled as the starlight shone on the smooth and sturdy wood. “This manger is beautiful” she said. Suddenly the first tree knew that she was holding the greatest treasure in the world.

One evening a tired traveller and his friends crowded into the old fishing boat. The traveller fell asleep as the second tree quietly sailed out into the lake. Soon a thundering and thrashing storm arose. The little tree shuddered. She knew that she did not have the strength to carry so many passengers safely through the wind and rain. The tired man awoke. He stood up, stretched out his hand and said, “Peace.” The storm stopped as

quickly as it had begun. And the second tree realised that she was carrying the king of heaven and earth.

One Friday morning the third tree was startled when her beams were yanked out of the forgotten wood pile. She flinched as she was carried through the angry, jostling, jeering crowd. She shuddered when soldiers nailed a man's hand to her. She felt ugly and harsh and cruel. But on Sunday morning, when the sun rose and the earth trembled with joy beneath her the third tree she knew that God's love had changed everything. It had made the third tree strong and every time people thought of the third tree they would think of God. That was better than being the tallest tree in the world.

- Application – Who do you know who is carrying a heavy burden? What can you do to help them?
- Conclude by praying together either by passing round a wooden holding cross or by focusing on a wooden cross.

2. The things He carried...a crown of thorns

Sermons in Church: 9 a.m. and 11 a.m. Sunday 13th March

- Read through chapter allowing time to be quiet (p.13-18).
- Use some or all of the reflection section
- Bible passage: Mark 15:16-20
- Sing *King of kings, majesty* (Mission Praise 1000) or another song to affirm our belief in Jesus as King of Kings.
- Application – think about bullying – of all ages – and what can be done to combat it. Think especially about the pain of ridicule.
- Pray!