

KINGTON BAPTIST CHURCH ONLINE NOTICE BOARD - 24

Please visit our website for the KBC spoken word Thought for the Day

<https://www.kingtonbaptistchurch.org/>

We are delighted to announce that from **Saturday 11th July** we will begin again to meet as a church.

We consider it not yet wise to re-commence our regular Sunday morning service.

But having a need and desire to meet for fellowship **we will re-open the church on Saturday mornings from 11th July at 10.30am for a time of fellowship, listening, sharing and prayer.**

Strict safe-guarding measures will be in place and we expect these to be carefully observed.

Please come ready to share with us – maybe a hymn you'd like to read (sadly singing is not permitted), a verse or passage from the Bible, something you've experienced during these last few months – whatever you believe will encourage and lift our hearts.

For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8.38-39)

We all know Paul's ringing statement of faith and hope with which he ends the eighth chapter of the letter to the Romans. It's an Everest peak in the New Testament. But we might wonder what it was that '*persuaded*' Paul and gave him such resounding confidence? What '*convinced*' him that 'nothing will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord'? How did he come to *know* this? And, just as importantly, how may we be '*persuaded*', so as to share Paul's confidence?

Of course the simple answer is this: 'the Bible tells me so!' It's written on the pages of Scripture: '*Whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved*' (Acts 2.21); '*My sheep hear my voice. I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish. No one will snatch them out of*

my hand. My Father is greater than all and no one can snatch them out of the Father's hand'. (John 10.27-29)

Well, that is an answer. But still we have to ask, what *persuades* us that these words are *true* – and true for *me*? What *convinces* me to trust the words of Jesus we find in the Bible? The reality is that not everyone trusts them; not everyone believes them or is persuaded by them. So what was it that Paul knew that persuaded him that these words are true? And how can I come to know they are true?

The Bible also gives the answer to that question.

I hear the words of Scripture; I read them or they may be read to me. As I come to know about Jesus from these words I begin to catch what this message is. I start noticing what is said about who he claimed to be, how he lived, what he did, what he said. These truths cling to me like burrs cling to my clothing. They begin to change my thinking. They begin to touch my heart. They may disturb me. They speak to *me* – as if they were addressed personally to me! And just as small individual bricks placed together may create a huge palace, and tiny drops of water make an ocean, so these individual truths, about the life and death of Jesus, come together with such force I'm convinced that he is who he said he was, that he did what he is said to have done. That these things about him *are* true!

But just as important God is secretly at work within my heart, or in what Paul wonderfully calls 'the spirit of my mind'. God is at work. And by his work within me I am '*renewed in the spirit of my mind*'. (Ephesians 4.23) By his Holy Spirit he opens my eyes, gives me light, helps me to see, to understand, to remember. As the hymn says: 'The Spirit breathes upon the Word, and brings the truth to sight...!'

God uses a divine and gracious 'pincer movement'! He comes at me from two directions: he comes to me from *outside* – in the words of the Bible; and he comes to me from *inside* – by the 'inner witness' of the Holy Spirit.

When that happens, when these two tremendous forces coalesce – the living word of God and the irresistible Holy Spirit – *then* I am *persuaded!* I 'assent'! I know with overwhelming certainty. I can say, as Paul said: *Let God be true and every man a liar!*

What if some do not believe? Does their unbelief prove that God's faithfulness means nothing? By no means! Let God be true and every man a liar! (Romans 3.3-4)

For I am persuaded that nothing in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord! (Romans 8.38-39)