

COMMENCEMENT REV. FOSTER'S MINISTRY [contd.]

The office of ministry is no small task. The apostle famously described it in **Acts 20:28** as requiring God's men to, "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which He hath purchased with His own blood." A huge responsibility, for which we cannot but consider ourselves to be insufficient.

Paul covets your prayers that the Lord will make him an able and effective minister of Christ. Please remember him – and his bride-to-be, Chloe – much in your prayers.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY



- Wednesday, 25 February @ 8.00pm: *Getting the Best out of your Bible – #12.*
- Monday, 13 April – Wednesday 15 April @ 6.00pm and 8.00pm: **MISSION SYDENHAM.**

MEETINGS TODAY

- Sunday School & Bible Class – 10.15am
- Morning Worship – 11.30am: *'How to Respond to Life's Tragedies'*
- Adult Bible Class – 3.10pm (with Rev. Fred Greenfield (Dunmurry))
- Evening Service – 7.00pm: *'The Fountain of the Water of Life.'*

INSPIRATION IN A SENTENCE

"I preached as never sure to preach again, and as a dying man to dying men." [Richard Baxter, author of the Puritan classic, *The Reformed Pastor*].



COMMENCEMENT OF MINISTRY OF REV. PAUL FOSTER

Lord's Day, 22 February 2015, is a momentous milestone in the life of one young man who is well known to us at Martyrs. It marks Rev. Paul Foster's first Lord's Day as an ordained minister in the Free Presbyterian Church of Ulster. Upon his ordination to the gospel ministry and installation as the new minister of our Tyndale Memorial congregation on Friday evening past, Mr. Foster will be preaching the Word at both morning and evening services. Members of the Tyndale congregation have engaged in a special outreach effort by delivering thousands of leaflets to the local community, inviting them to join with them in welcoming their new minister to their pulpit. [\[continued on back page\]](#)



HOW TO RESPOND TO THE TRAGEDIES OF LIFE

Text: **Exodus 33:18-23**.

Our world is stumbling from one crisis into another as it traverses a trail of unending devastation. Brutal conflicts and bloodthirsty terrorist attacks give rise to a multitude of questions – principally, how should we react to the tragedies of life?

Exodus 33 provides some pointers, for it details God's directions and discussion with Moses on the back of a punishing plague that claimed up to 23,000 lives.

[1] A REQUEST.

Moses pleads to see the glory of God (**Exodus 33:18**), to know:

(a) INDICATIONS OF GOD'S COMPASSION.

We are especially vulnerable in hard times. When everything seems to be out of control, we feel overwhelmed – and we need to be assured of the compassion of God.

(b) INTIMACY WITH GOD'S CHARACTER.

Moses understood that the key to surviving tragic times is to seek intimacy with God rather than isolation from God. Therefore he made his way outside the camp, into the tabernacle, in order to commune with God "face to face."

A basic choice confronts us in times of crisis: we can become angry at God and withdraw from and blame Him ... or we can run to the Lord, convinced that only He can make sense of tragic times, plus provide the healing and strength we need. To turn from God plunges us into a maelstrom of hopelessness.

Moses runs to the Lord and wants to dig deeper into His character: "*Shew me Thy glory.*" He wants a clear sight of God's will and instructions; he wants cleansing, healing and help; he wants motivations to obey and serve God.

[2] A RESPONSE.

The Lord explains that, much as Moses may wish to penetrate the inner reason of everything, he cannot understand the totality of God's ways (**Exodus 33:20**, cf. **Isaiah 55:8-9**). However, though Moses was not granted his desire for a full display of God's glory, he was treated to some 'after glow' of that glory. Therefore Moses, while not given what he wanted, was given what he needed. A glimpse of God's greatness is all our faculties can cope with (**Exodus 34:5-7**).

God has not ignored our cries for help. He has given:

(a) THE INCARNATE WORD OF GOD – JESUS.

Through Him we learn God is loving and merciful (**Luke 6:36**, **John 3:16**), that God's heart feels for us (**Hebrews 4:14-16**), that the Saviour is preparing a home in heaven for us (**John 14:1-6**).

(b) THE WRITTEN WORD OF GOD.

Accounts in the Word – of Job, Habakkuk, David, Jeremiah, Jesus, the disciples, etc., – inspire us and fortify our faith.

(c) THE HOLY SPIRIT OF GOD.

John 14:16-18 assures us we are not left without a Comforter.

[3] A REQUIREMENT.

(a) We must guard against trying to 'protect' God.

He is never the author of evil, but, while He has the power to prevent evil, there are occasions when He permits it. He is sovereign and in control - if He is not, then our situation is even more tragic than we thought! [cf. Strobel / Kreeft dialogue].

(b) We must respond to crisis by personal evaluation.

To honestly examine our hearts, actions and interactions with others is a must. To be "right with God" ourselves is imperative.

(c) We should strive for progress in our walk with God.

cf. **Exodus 33:18**. A putty faith is useless in tragic times; we need to cultivate real and substantial faith.