



**Love is patient;
love is kind;
love is not
envious
or boastful
or arrogant.**

1 Corinthians 13: 4

Redditch Baptist Church

February 2026

David letter

February: a rather depressing month, in some ways – although it does of course feature Valentine’s Day, with its emphasis on love...

The word “love” probably makes most people happy – but how do you feel about “doctrine”? Do your eyes light up at the prospect of a doctrinal discussion, or does the excitement drain away, seeing as “doctrine” is difficult, divisive and of purely academic interest?

That definitely seems to be what a lot of people think – but it’s not true! “Doctrine” means “teaching”, and what we call Christian doctrine is simply meant to be a succinct formulation of what the Bible teaches about some specific subject.

Unfortunately there’s a lot of confusion in this area: sometimes caused by somebody inventing new doctrines (like the Mormons), other times by people denying or reinterpreting important biblical truths (like Jehovah’s Witnesses). This can have far-reaching consequences!

During the 19th century many prominent Bible scholars embraced a worldview that excluded the supernatural. This made sense in view of the prevailing Enlightenment mentality with its emphasis on the material world: reality only applies to things we can see and hear and measure (you will notice that a lot of atheist apologetics take this starting point for granted).

So these scholars reduced Christianity to a moral standard, meaning Jesus became just another good moral teacher who didn’t perform miracles and didn’t rise from the dead. This diluted version of Christianity spread wide and far within the church, and even though it’s much less prominent today, its sad effects are still with us.

And here’s the thing: many of those scholars were convinced they were doing the right thing: they were hoping to help Christianity survive the encounter with a modern mindset – as if the gospel isn’t powerful enough to withstand any kind of attack...

An important part of this “reinventing” of Christianity was the emphasis on love as the core element of Christianity – which of course is not wrong! But I am convinced that this denial of any supernatural element in our faith is a main reason why the church lost so much ground during the 19th and 20th centuries.

Just think about it: if Christianity has nothing unique to offer, why be a Christian? If God never intervenes in human history, how can we even know he’s there? If all religious statements are just ‘sentiments’ rather than fact, why should I care about any of them? And if Jesus didn’t rise from the dead, what genuine hope can we offer in the face of suffering and bereavement?

We mustn’t allow anyone to distort the Good News we have to proclaim. The Gospel of human sin, divine love and redemption through blood of Jesus was always countercultural, and must remain so in all ages and all cultures. It might be uncomfortable, but if the message is true, we have no other choice but to stand by it.

And don’t forget: “God is love” is also a doctrinal statement!

David

February			
Tues		10.15am	Little Fishes
Thurs		11am-2pm	Harm Reduction
March			
Sat	7 th	10am-2pm	Knife Crime community event (see below)

Our church will be hosting an anti-knife crime community event organised by Joe Bevan. Chris Bloore MP, the Mayor and the chief of police have confirmed their attendance. The event will incorporate prayer for our town.

WELCOMING TEAM – in the distant past we had a team of volunteers welcoming people to church on Sunday mornings. For quite a time that team has consisted of only one person ...So we think it's time to add to it again! We haven't had a lot of volunteers yet – so please consider joining the team to welcome people as they arrive to church!

CHURCHES TOGETHER TREASURER You may know that we are part of the Churches Together in Redditch (CTiR). For a long time our treasurer Alan has also been the treasurer for CTiR, but he now needs to step down from that role. So if you are willing to volunteer as the new treasurer for CTiR, please speak to Alan ASAP!

The Breakfast Club is next open during the school half term holiday which starts on Monday 16th February. We will open each morning from Monday to Friday.

If you feel you can volunteer for one or more day please could you add your name to the rota, available here:

[Rotas 2026.xlsx](#)

Volunteers need to be available from 9am until 11am to help set up and tidy away. We open to guests from 9.30am to 10.15am. It is really helpful to know in advance who can be there each day. If you have never helped before but would like to find out more, please contact me directly or talk to others who have helped. We would love to welcome you to the team!

Numbers of guests have been down a little recently so please pray that the information shared with local schools and other agencies would reach new families and that they would feel able to pop in.

Thank you, Tom King

ONLINE CHURCH

In case you are unable to attend the Sunday service in person (don't drive if the conditions are dangerous), remember you can join us on Zoom instead:

Meeting ID: 619 679 7453, passcode: Jesus. And if you're not able to do that either, sermons are usually available on the church YouTube channel a day or so later:

<https://www.youtube.com/@redditchbaptists8580>

As a special service most songs we sing at church (except some carols, which are easy to find anyway) can be found on this YouTube playlist:

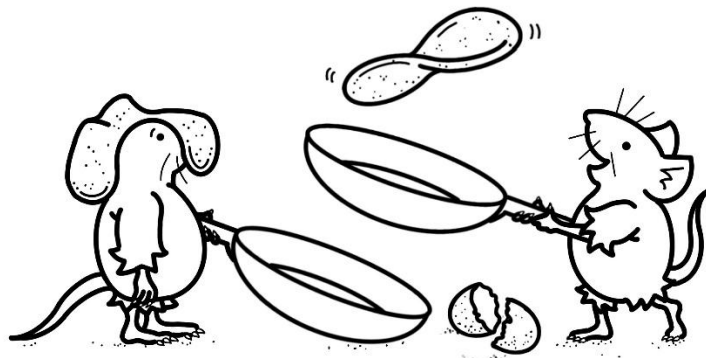
<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLFL9gCcBHIYbhrDR4T6LkJo0gxc5dNo0J>

Winter and Spring

Lord, end my winter, and let my spring begin. I cannot with all my longings raise my soul out of her death and dullness, but all things are possible with Thee. I need celestial influences, the clear shinings of Thy love, the beams of Thy grace, the light of thy countenance; these are the Pleiades to me.

I suffer much from sin and temptation, these are my wintry signs, my terrible Orion. Lord, work wonders in me, and for me.

By Charles Haddon Spurgeon 1834 - 1892



Before me

Before me be Thou a smooth way,
Above me be Thou a star-guide,
Behind me be Thou keen-eyed,
For this day, this night, and for aye.

I weary and heavy am driv'n,
Lead me on to the angels' place;
'Twere time now I went for a space
To Christ's court and the peace of heav'n;

If only Thou, God of life, give
Smooth peace for me, at my back near,
Be as star, as helmsman to steer,
From smooth rest till rising I live.

From Poems of the Western Highlanders

IMPOSSIBLE FAITH

Violent extremists. Dictatorial authorities. Hostile relatives.

They all have one aim: to make being a Christian impossible.

How do they do it? They make it clear that choosing to follow Jesus might cost your family, your job, your freedom and even your life. You might be attacked at any moment. You might endure decades of mounting pressures. You will be target, an outcast or maybe even a martyr/

But is it working? Absolutely not. In all 10 countries featured in your Open Doors World Watch List Top 10, and in dozens more, your persecuted brothers and sisters wake up each morning reaffirming their faith. They know it should be impossible. But they know and love the God of the impossible.

Each year, Open Doors uses extensive research, interviews and detailed information to rank the countries where Christians face the most extreme persecution. As you read about courageous believers from the 10 hardest places to follow Jesus, please join with them in unstoppable, defiant prayer. Hear the testimonies of faith that should be impossible and know that in your prayers, you – like them – are part of God's impossible plan.

The Seven Deadly Sins: Greed

'How much money is enough? Just a little bit more.' (John D Rockefeller).

In the second of our series on the Seven Deadly Sins, we are looking at greed. It is the overwhelming desire for *more and more* in our lives. In our consumer culture it can be hard to tell the difference between needs and wants - e.g. buying a new laptop or shoes for different occasions? We need to ask the question: *How much is enough?*

Jesus was approached by a man who wanted Him to settle a dispute about family inheritance. He said, *'Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; life does not consist in an abundance of possessions.'* (Luke 12:15). Jesus goes on to tell the story of a rich farmer who builds bigger and bigger barns, but whose life is unexpectedly cut short by death. He concludes: *'This is how it will be with whoever stores up things for themselves but is not rich towards God.'* (21).

How do we overcome greed and become *'rich towards God'*? Paul writes: *'I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want.'* (Philippians 4:13). Overcoming greed involves learning to be content in whatever situation we find ourselves, in need or plenty. Paul is not saying that there is anything wrong with having food, money or possessions, but these cannot be the primary source of our contentment. The secret of contentment is found in a transforming relationship with Jesus: *'I can do all this through Him who gives me strength.'* (13). He is the one who enables us to overcome greed and know riches.

'Contentment makes poor men rich; discontent makes rich men poor.' (Benjamin Franklin).

What's the Big Idea? - An Introduction to the Old Testament: Isaiah

Isaiah is often regarded as the greatest of the prophets. His name means *'The Lord saves'* and he began his 50-year ministry in 740 BC when King Uzziah died (6:1). Many scholars challenge the claim that Isaiah wrote the entire book, however there are striking verbal parallels between chapters 1–39 and 40–66.

Isaiah spoke during the stormy period marking the expansion of the Assyrian empire and the decline of Israel. The Assyrians destroyed the northern kingdom in 721. Judah was left to decide whether they would make alliances with other kingdoms or rely on God to protect them. Isaiah warns Judah that her sin would bring captivity in Babylon, which eventually took place in 586.

Isaiah sees the Messiah coming from the line of David. He speaks of a new temple being established (ch2); a child born with a new kingdom (ch9) and judging differently to other kings (ch11) as well as the nature of His suffering (ch53). The *'suffering servant'* (chapters 42–53) also applies to Israel as a nation, who are called to be a *'light for the Gentiles'* (42:6). Not surprisingly Jesus applies Isaiah's words to His own life and ministry. eg Is 61:1 quoted in Luke 4:18. Throughout his book Isaiah presents the full dimensions of God's judgment and salvation as *'the Holy One of Israel'* (6:1), as well as the *'Sovereign Lord'* far above all nations (40:15–24).

Isaiah looks forward to the promise of a new city of Zion (chs 60-66), in which the people offer praise to the Holy One of Israel. *'Behold, I will create new heavens and a new earth. The former things will not be remembered, nor will they come to mind.'* (65:17).



Shrove Tuesday – Pancake Day – 9th February

It's odd, really, to think that that confessing one's sins to God should be linked to making pancakes. And yet the beginning of Lent brings us both – Shrove Tuesday is Pancake Day, and is followed by Ash Wednesday, and so Lent begins.

In centuries gone by, the pancakes were made to use up the milk and eggs before the fasting of Lent. More recently, many readers will have childhood memories of the wonder of watching our mothers break an egg, mix it with milk and flour – and out of that gooey mess, to produce a light and delicious pancake.

These days, more of us buy pancake mix, or even ready-made pancakes. It seems we prefer the certainty of ending up with pancakes - to the risk of having made nothing BUT a mess of the kitchen.

In many parishes they used to hold pancake races on the day. Why anyone would want to run around a field while holding a pancake is not clear, but in Olney, Bucks, they have held a pancake race almost every year since 1445.

A religious upbringing helps your health in later life

Elderly people who had a religious upbringing have been found to be physically healthier, according to a recent study.

Scientists believe that one reason may be that they did not use drugs, cigarettes or alcohol when they were young. The data found that such people are reporting fewer difficulties with daily activities such as dressing or washing.

The study looked at older people across Europe, and the results were published in the journal Social Science and Medicine.

Many children in Europe who grew up after the Second World War had families who attended church on a regular basis, and who had Christian moral beliefs and values. For many children, this provided a sense of meaning in life, and a sense of belonging. They felt more 'connected', and hence more mentally and physically stable.



The Winter Olympics returns to Europe

If you like snow-sports, you are in for a great month. From 6th to 22nd February, Italy will be hosting the 2026 Winter Olympics, officially known as Milano Cortina 2026. The opening ceremony is at football's famous San Siro stadium. The Paralympic Winter Games follows, from 6th to 15th March.

For the first time the Winter Games will have two host cities, Milan and Cortina d'Ampezzo, with events spread across 15 venues in northern Italy, using existing infrastructure to reduce costs. (Thus, Milan will host indoor events like hockey and figure skating, while Cortina hosts alpine skiing and snowboarding.)

Around 3,500 athletes from more than 90 countries are expected to compete for 195 medals across 16 Olympic disciplines. New this year is ski-mountaineering.

Snow gets an occasional mention in the Bible. Job tells how God "Says to the snow, 'Fall on the earth' ... He stops all people from their labour. The tempest comes out from its chamber, the cold from the driving winds. At His direction they swirl around over the face of the whole earth to do whatever He commands them."

Let's hope that the snow does a good deep swirl around Italy this month.

The Big Bash!



JESUS OFTEN TOLD STORIES WITH HIDDEN MEANINGS

ONE STORY WAS ABOUT A RICH MAN WHO DECIDED TO HAVE A PARTY

HE SENT OUT LOTS OF INVITATIONS

OH!
NO!!

BUT PEOPLE STARTED MAKING EXCUSES

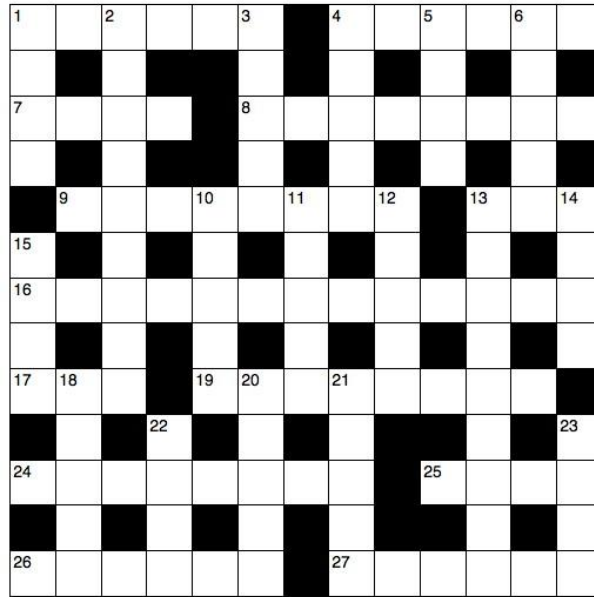
ONE MAN SAID HE HAD BOUGHT A FIELD, BUT NEEDED TO MEASURE IT

ANOTHER MAN SAID HE NEEDED TO TEST DRIVE THE OXEN HE HAS JUST PAID FOR

ANOTHER MAN SAID HE HAD JUST GOT MARRIED - AND HIS WIFE WOULDN'T LET HIM OUT!

SO THE RICH MAN INVITED ALL THE POOR AND NEEDY INSTEAD.

THE PARABLE MEANS WE SHOULDN'T MAKE EXCUSES FOR NOT FOLLOWING JESUS.



- 1 'If you love those who love you, what — is that to you?' (Luke 6:32) (6)
 4 'They threw the ship's — overboard' (Acts 27:19) (6)
 7 The first murderer (Genesis 4:8) (4)
 8 He was the head Levite in charge of the singing when the ark of God was brought back to Jerusalem (1 Chronicles 15:22) (8)
 9 Samson was noted for this (Judges 16:6) (8)
 13 Solicit money or food from passers by (Acts 3:2) (3)
 16 What William Booth's Christian Mission became in 1878 (9,4)
 17 Alliance of Religions and Conservation (1,1,1)
 19 'I will praise your name for ever and ever. — — I will praise you' (Psalm 145:1–2) (5,3)
 24 Simon had (anag.) (8)
 25 Desperate (Deuteronomy 28:48) (4)
 26 Elisha witnessed the boy he was seeking to resuscitate do this seven times before opening his eyes (2 Kings 4:35) (6)
 27 The belly and thighs of the statue in Nebuchadnezzar's dream were made of this (Daniel 2:32) (6)

Down

- 1 'Before the — crows, you will disown me three times' (Matthew 26:75) (4)
 2 Relating to the books of the Bible between Acts and Revelation (9)
 3 'They have — the Lord out of the tomb, and we don't know where they have put him!' (John 20:2) (5)
 4 Belief (5)
 5 'Take the following fine spices: ... 250 shekels of fragrant — ' (Exodus 30:23) (4)
 6 'Do not — Jerusalem, but wait for the gift' (Acts 1:4) (5)
 10 A seer (anag.) (5)
 11 'Even there your hand will — me' (Psalm 139:10) (5)
 12 The wild variety was part of John the Baptist's diet (Mark 1:6) (5)
 13 A non-Greek speaker who was looked down on by civilized people (Colossians 3:11) (9)
 14 Famous 1950s musical whose characters included members of
 16 Across, — and Dolls (4)
 15 The province from which Paul wrote to the Corinthians (1 Corinthians 16:19) (4)
 18 'He was standing in the gateway with a linen cord and a measuring — — his hand' (Ezekiel 40:3) (3,2)
 20 'Today, if you hear his — , do not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion' (Hebrews 3:15) (5)
 21 The Jericho prostitute who hid two Israelite spies on the roof of her house (Hebrews 11:31) (5)
 22 'And now these three remain: faith, — and love. But the greatest of these is love' (1 Corinthians 13:13) (4)
 23 'God has numbered the days of your reign and brought it to an end' (Daniel 5:26) (4)

Crossword Solution

ACROSS: 1, Credit. 4, Tackle. 7, Cain. 8, Kenaniah. 9, Strength. 13, Beg. 16, Salvation Army. 17, ARC. 19, Every day. 24, Admonish. 25, Dire. 26, Sneeze. 27, Bronze.

DOWN: 1, Cock. 2, Epistolic. 3, Taken. 4, Tenet. 5, Cane. 6, Leave. 10, Erase. 11, Guide. 12, Honey. 13, Barbarian. 14, Guys. 15, Asia. 18, Rod in. 20, Voice. 21, Rahab. 22, Hope. 23, Mene.

Can you get across the pedestrian crossing in time?

Have you ever had to hurry to make it to safely across the street because the pedestrian crossing light is about to turn red again?

If so, you are not alone. A recent study has found that pedestrian crossing timings are simply too brief for many elderly people and especially those with mobility problems.

The length of time given at crossing points usually assumes a walking speed of 1.2m per second. But the study found that the average speed of adults aged over 65 is only 0.77m per second.

So more than half of older people need to increase their normal walking speed by about 50 per cent, just to reach the other curb safely.

One of the researchers said: "This isn't just a safety issue – it's potentially a barrier to independence, physical activity, and social connection, all of which often decline in later life."

Another said: "Allowing enough time to cross the road can boost confidence, support independence, and help them remain engaged in their communities, all key to a better quality of life."

The study was published in the journal *Age and Ageing*.

