

Weekly Newsletter: 28th February 2023

Reflection: Who do you listen to?

By Lorna Ferguson

“The way of a fool is right in his own eyes, but a wise man listens to advice.” Proverbs 12:15

I wonder if you have heard of or watched the children’s series “What’s in the Bible?”, by Phil Vischer (creator of the original VeggieTales). Phil uses puppets, sketches and songs to teach children about the Bible. One song which stuck in my head is “Who do you trust, who do you listen to?” ([Here](#) is a link if you would like to listen.) The song is intended to help explain the concept of sin, but I have found over the years that the question “Who do I trust, who do I listen to?” is an important one to ask myself regularly.

The question of who we should listen to also struck me as I’ve been preparing my Japanese devotions on the book of Esther. In Chapter 1 we find King Ahasuerus (also known as King Xerxes) hosting a week-long feast. He has had quite a bit to drink and asks Queen Vashti to come to be shown off to the guests. When she refuses, the king is enraged and asks the wise men next to him for advice on what to do. Truly wise men might have suggested that the king wait until he had sobered up and calmed down before making such an important decision. But instead, one of them, Memucan, advises the king to write a decree banishing Vashti from his presence and then find another queen. In verse 21 we are told that, “This advice pleased the king and the princes, and the king did as Memucan proposed.”

Some time later, in Chapter 2, the King’s young male attendants advise the King to bring all the beautiful young virgins to the harem in Susa so that the King could choose a new queen. Here too, “This pleased the king and he did so” (verse 4). King Ahasuerus was a powerful ruler. His kingdom was vast, stretching over 127 provinces all the way from India to Ethiopia. And yet rather than seeking wise advice, we get the sense that this powerful king just listened to the ideas of whoever happened to be around at the time. And if that advice pleased him, it seems he just went for it without thinking.

Later in the story we see something similar with Haman, also a powerful man whom the king had promoted above the other officials. In Chapter 5, Haman becomes incensed when he feels slighted by the Jew Mordecai and tells his wife and friends about it. Wise friends would surely have tried to calm Haman down, to help him gain some perspective. But these friends, along with his wife, instead advise Haman to have a gallows built and to ask the king to hang Mordecai on it. We are told, “This idea pleased Haman, and he had the gallows made” (Chapter 5 verse 14). Just like King Ahasuerus, Haman lacks discernment both as to who to get advice from and as to whether he should follow the advice he gets.

Proverbs 12:15 tells us that, “The way of a fool is right in his own eyes, but a wise man listens to advice.” If we want to be wise, we must ask for advice, but we must also be discerning about who we listen to. I think there are at least four traps that we might fall into:

1. Not to ask for advice at all, but just do whatever feels right;
2. To ask for advice, but from the wrong people, for example people we know will just agree with us, or people who themselves lack wisdom;
3. To just do what we are advised without engaging with it critically to ascertain if the advice is indeed wise; or
4. To only listen to advice we like, or that matches what we wanted all along.

As we seek God’s guidance, it is important that we ask others for advice. We usually do not know everything we need in order to make a wise decision. We all have our own blind spots, so the perspective of others can be invaluable. But we also need to exercise discernment in deciding who to listen to. It’s not enough just to listen to the people who happen to be there at the time, or people who will just tell us what we want to hear. We must make sure that we have friends who will tell us the truth, even if it might be painful. When we receive advice, however, it is also important not to follow it blindly but instead to critically engage with it, to discern if it is indeed what God wants. And finally, we have to be open to genuinely listen to advice that we might not like, or advice which challenges what we want. If the advice we get from others always agrees with what we already think, then we are probably not looking for advice in the best places.

Who do we listen to? Do we have friends or people in our lives that we can trust to give us good advice, to tell us the truth even if we might not like it? And are we that sort of wise friend to others?

“Listen to advice and accept instruction, that you may gain wisdom in the future.” Proverbs 19:20

Raising Kids for Christ in a Confusing World – this Saturday

We’re excited to have Mel Lacy (from Growing Young Disciples) speaking at our parenting conference on **Raising Kids for Christ in a Confusing World** on Saturday 4th March. The conference will run from 9.30am until 3.30pm and is free to attend.

Mel is one of the most helpful voices in the UK in terms of helping parents navigate the difficult waters of identity, technology, sexuality, and the basics of raising children for Christ. It promises to be a great day!

Please contact Liz (Liz@holyroodevangelical.org) to book and anyone is welcome to attend so please pass on the details to family or friends who may be interested.

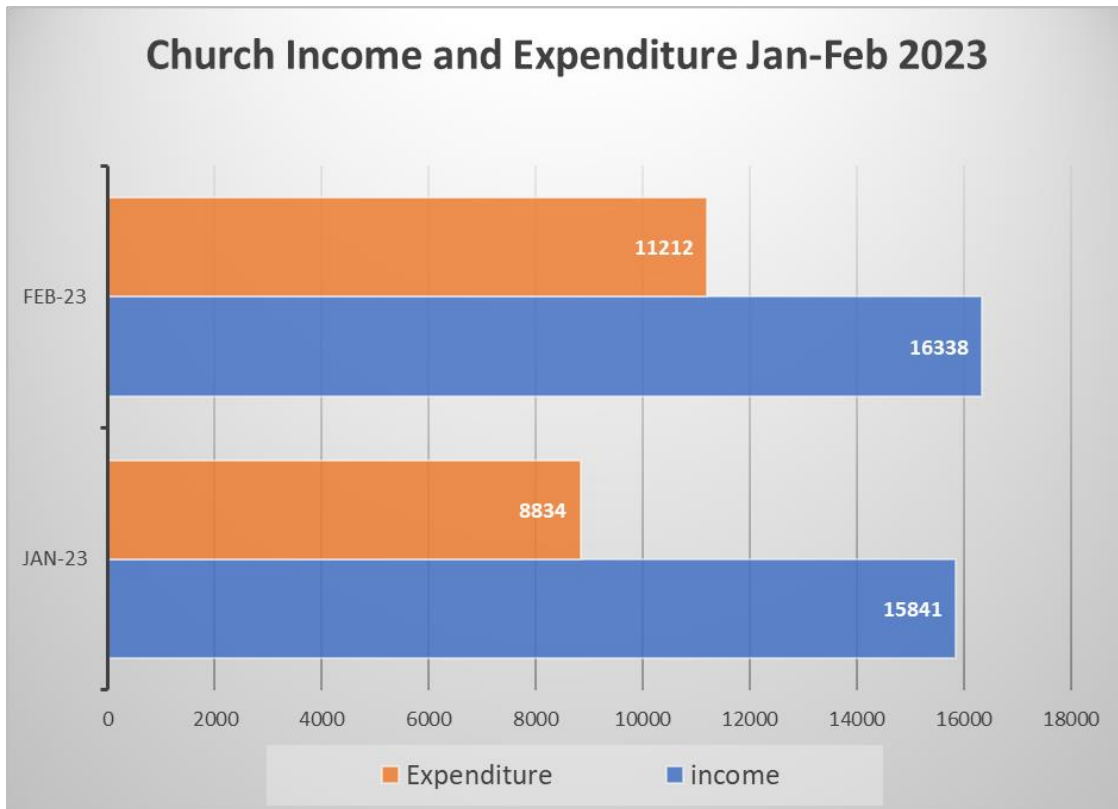


Tamas Daxner – Scripture Union Hungary

Tamas, who is the National Leader for SU Hungary, will be in Edinburgh from Thursday 2nd until Sunday 5th March. We are looking forward to meeting him and we’ll be praying for the work of SU Hungary on Wednesday at the prayer meeting. For more information about the work of SU in Hungary, go [here](#).

Finance Update

By Nick Archer



As a church fellowship we are blessed with generous givers and we thank God for providing for our needs. Pray for wisdom in how the church spends the money in the work of the gospel.

Church Calendar

For your prayers and info –

- Monday:
 - Baby & Toddler Group from 10am – 11.30am
 - Warm Space from 12.30 – 4pm
- Wednesday: Prayer Meeting at 7pm on Zoom
- Thursday:
 - Men's Discipleship in person at 7.30am or 10.30am
 - Mission Team Meeting at 7.30pm in person
- Saturday: Raising Kids for Christ in a Confusing World Conference from 9am until 3.30pm
- Sunday:
 - Communion Service at 10.30am (and live streamed). Joe Barnard preaching.
 - Equip at 6pm



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