

June 2008 In the Summertime

Most of us look forward to and enjoy the summer. Especially is this so when it is warm and bright. What fruitful thoughts can this prompt? Here are just three..

Firstly, summertime reminds us that *God is faithful to all his promises*. Do you remember what happened after Noah and company eventually came out of the ark, after the flood? God made a most wonderful promise – and one, moreover, which was not just for Noah but for us. ‘While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease’ (Genesis 8:22). The seasons are mentioned here – summer and winter being representative of all four seasons of the year. And God has kept his promise unfailingly. Whatever the weather, every year has its summer. Even in these days when so much is said (more than needs to be said?) about ‘climate change’, God gives us summers.

The wonderful necessity that follows from this is that the God who keeps one of his promises keeps all of his promises. So ransack the Scriptures for the promises of God, and when you find them believe them and plead them in prayer.

Secondly, summertime assures us that *God is mindful of all our needs*. We are created to work (and in doing so, to do all things to the glory of God). Nowhere in the Bible does idleness get any encouragement. But we cannot work literally all the time. We need breaks. And while we may take these at various times of the year, summertime is a favourite time for such a holiday – and that doesn’t have to mean going to expense that we can’t afford. Our minds, bodies, energies, indeed our whole system (for we are ‘fearfully and wonderfully made’, Psalm 139:14) all need to take some rest, to have some relaxation, to benefit from some change. It is part of ‘resting in the Lord’ in the Christian life that we take some literal ‘rest’.

Something needs to be emphasized however: we cannot afford to take spiritual rest, or spiritual ‘time off’. Prayer and Bible reading is as important on holiday as at any other time. So is the keeping of the Lord’s Day – a well-kept Lord’s Day can ‘make’ a holiday, whereas a neglected or disappointing Lord’s Day can ruin a holiday.

Thirdly, summertime teaches us that *God has made full provision for our eternal rest* – an ‘everlasting summer’, if you like. Jesus’ teaching in Matthew 24:32ff about the fig tree and its leaves telling us that ‘summer is nigh’ keeps in our view the return of Christ and the things that are laid up in store for us in heaven, where Christ is, in whom our life is hid. That’s another subject (maybe for another pastoral letter some time). But it should whet our appetites and tug at our hearts just to mention it!