

2. To deliver means to GIVE BIRTH TO NEW LIFE.

"The delivery room" always seemed to be an integral part of the maternity unit at the local hospital. One of the great stories of the Gospels surely is about Nicodemus. A man who spent hours debating with his fellow religious leaders the minutiae of the Pharisee laws -it was his job. Then somehow he heard about the things that a man from Nazareth was doing so he slipped unseen through the dark, cobbled winding streets one night just so he could meet Jesus personally. What a conversation they had but Nicodemus didn't get it as Jesus talked about *"Unless a man is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God"* (John 3:3).

Mystified, Nicodemus asks *"How can this be ?"* (John 3:9) It was then came the explosive words of John 3:16 to inform Nicodemus it all begins with God. and ends with life. The "Strong Deliverer" is at work again He loves .. He gave ... we believe ... we live. Salvation is not what we achieve, it is what we receive - a new birth, a new life. It is that new life in Christ which brings to the individual an extra-ordinary power for all of life's demands.. Our Christian life begins when we invite Jesus to live within us. As things turned out Nicodemus was around when Jesus was crucified, so he turned up with Joseph of Arimathea, as together they sorted out the burial. That was quite a feat considering all the opposition. Did he smile to himself when he heard that the tomb was empty on Easter day?

3. To deliver means to SAVE SOMEONE FROM A TERRIBLE SITUATION.

Perhaps this is the most easily recognised meaning of the word deliver in the Bible. We discover that God is a never ending source of strength, help and courage whenever we call on Him. All of us face stressful situations at some time or another. At times it will seem like we are going through an earthquake as Psalm 46 comments in its poetic way *"the earth gives way, mountains fall into the sea, the waters roar and foam"* - the instinct is to want to run. But listen *"Be still and know that I am God"* v10. HE is there for you. God steps into our lives as the *"strong Deliverer"* He did for Israel as they approached the Red Sea fearful as they heard the hoofbeats of the chasing Egyptian army. He did for the family at a wedding in Cana when they had to fill the water pots and discover water turned to wine. A storm on the lake threatened to sink their boat. The crowd needed to see a boy's lunch box turn into a meal for some 5,000 people there that day. He will always be a *"strong Deliverer"* for you - no matter what happens to you.

ROCHFORD CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

Welcome to

CHURCH AT HOME

Sunday 25th July 2021

STRONG DELIVERER

Read through this outline and join with everyone else at 11 am

HYMN MP 201 (to read or sing)

Guide me, O Thou great Jehovah,
Pilgrim through this barren land;
I am weak, but Thou art mighty;
Hold me with Thy powerful hand.
Bread of heaven,
Bread of heaven,
Feed me now and evermore.

Open now the crystal fountain,
Whence the healing stream doth flow.
Let the fiery, cloudy, pillar
Lead me all my journey though.
Strong Deliverer,
Strong Deliverer,
Be Thou still my strength and shield.

When I tread the verge of Jordan,
Bid my anxious fears subside.
Death of death, and hell's destruction,
Land me safe on Canaan's side.
Songs of praises,
Songs of praises,
I will ever give to you.

(William Williams 1717 - 91)

(It would be good if you said this prayer out aloud)

O our gracious God and loving Heavenly Father
Here we are again - only You know what we have been.
going through in so many different ways.
Help us Lord to discover again the joy, peace and blessing
that comes through knowing You will be our strong Deliverer
AMEN *(You may like to say the Lord's prayer also).*

BIBLE VERSE FOR THE WEEK

STRONG DELIVERER

"The Lord is my rock, my fortress, and my Deliverer" (2 Samuel 22:2)
" He is my loving God ... my stronghold, my Deliverer" (Psalm 144:2)

One of the surprises of the pandemic was the ability to get a delivery spot from one of the Supermarket giants -Tesco, Ocado, Waitrose or whoever.. Then along came a whole industry led by Deliveroo, Amazon, Take-Aways and others all striving for the right to deliver anything and everything to you.

William Williams caught the idea of "*Strong Deliverer*" from his understanding of the journey from the slavery in Egypt to freedom. From Genesis to Revelation God is recognised as the "*Great Deliverer*". Noah finds God delivers him from the fury and the devastation of the Flood. Israel is delivered from the awful bondage of Egyptian slavery. David says triumphantly "*The Lord who delivered me from the paw of the lion, and the bear, will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine*" (1 Samuel 17:37) and He did! The giant Goliath crashed to the ground defeated. Daniel is delivered from the lions, Shadrack, Meshak and Abednego from the fiery furnace. God delivered them all.

Deliverance is a recurring theme. Just a glance at the Psalms will resonate with your heart for they are full of the emotions we all express and feel. Joy and sorrow, doubt and faith, frustration and thanksgiving, hope and despair, agony and ecstasy, trust and complaining, prayer and praise. But time and time again there is this sense of gratitude because God is the Great Deliverer. Listen to this "*they cried to the Lord in their trouble AND HE DELIVERED them from their distress*" (Psalm 107:11) What is interesting is to note how differently we can use this word "deliver"

1. To deliver means to BRING SOMETHING TO SOMEONE.

My first job as a paper boy delivering papers in the early morning was to take the news to people - I could not read the newspaper for them. All I had to do was to deliver it to them. I am still in the job delivering news - it just happens to be the "Good News of the Gospel". What is more it is still up to people to accept, receive and make the news their own. There is a simple yet profound statement in *Titus 2:11 " the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men"* How ?

Just glance again at Jesus and see what He did.

He exchanged all the glory and splendour of heaven for a grimy stable and a manger bed. He exchanged the worship and adoration of angels in order to hang on a cross with a couple of criminals on either side of Him. He was God yet He slept on a bed of straw. He "*humbled Himself*" so He went from commanding angels to clutching at Mary's finger. He held the universe in His hands but allowed the Roman soldiers to drive spike nails through them. He came from limitless eternity in order to be confined in time so that He could be like us. He did what He did because He loved us. What Jesus did is what love does. He wanted to deliver us from our sin and crass stupidity. He came to bring us a most wonderful salvation.

God's love is bigger and better than anything we can imagine or comprehend so to deliver us from sin Jesus came and would die on a cross. for us. Do you remember the story of the woman caught in adultery and as she stood in the centre of a circle of those self appointed custodians of conduct? She had been caught cheating, so she must die. Jesus was writing in the sand and when He spoke said "*Anyone here who has never sinned, throw the first stone*".. One by one you heard the sound of stones falling to the ground as the crowd melted away. Jesus asked "*Where are your accusers?*" Then He told her to go home, and leave your life of sin.

Do you want to know how God reacts when you and I fail? Watch carefully. He is writing a message - not in the sand - but on a cross. Jesus has come to bring us salvation, forgiveness and peace with God. Jesus gave up His crown in heaven for a crown of thorns - just for you. Can He bring you now this great gift of salvation and new life?. When you make Him your Saviour you will know Him as your "*strong deliverer*".