**Aldham HC:** Sound *Pippa,*  Assist *MD or JR*

**Notices: Results of Harvest Lunch donations**

S&HOF 388  O Breath of Life come sweeping through us

Isaiah 5. 1-7 *Janet Gediking*

Galatians 5. 13-26 *Sally Green*

purple 43   Brother sister let me serve you

Matthew 21. 33-end *Ian S-T*

Preaching *Ian S-T, FOFL 2*

Intercessions *~~Iain MacC~~ Martyn Drain*

purple 13  How deep the Father's love for us

Communion *Ian S-T*

purple 82  My heart is filled with thankfulness

Ask Jan + Keith to feedback to Aldham from Vision Day

Ask Jane + Tim + Andrew + Peter to feedback to Marks Tey from Vision Day

**Sermon**: Ian S-T FOFL 2: M1: Modelling Godly Character

**Slide 1: Black**

OK, here’s our memory verse for today: read it with me...

**Slide 2: Fruit**

Let’s try that one more time...

**Slide 3: Fruit**

OK, let me tell you a story...

**Slide 4: School friends**

Two new students at my secondary school went very different ways: one mixed with a crowd of rebels, got caught out one night, and was thrown out of the school. The other mixed with the musicians and keen history students, stayed on and did well.

At School and in life: choose the right friends. Some will lead you astray. Choose people of good character. What are this person’s good points; what are their flaws? Will they draw you closer to God, or further away?

What brought you to faith? Often it is the character of a Christian that is attractive. I want what they’ve got!

**Slide 5: FOFL 2**

Our course is “Fruitfulness on the Frontline.” In the Bible, God’s people are often described as His vine or his fig-tree, and He wants us to produce fruit for Him. What do we mean by fruit? We could describe that in many ways: showing Christ to the world, being like Jesus, witnessing for him, doing good in the world

Today’s topic is the first of six ‘M’s – six ways to be more fruitful for God, beginning with the letter ‘M’. Today, “Modelling Godly Character.”

Modelling Godly Character is not just about being nice: Jesus was not always ‘nice’! Just as Love is about more than being nice, so is Godly Character – it goes deeper. It involves some of these qualities, the Fruits of the Spirit:

**Slide 6: Fruit**

Test?...

**Slide 7: Grid**

OK, just as Love is about more than being nice, so is Godly Character – it goes deeper, and it copes with the tough times, too.

**Slide 8: Praying**

Louise (on the video), coping with her ogre-like boss. Some of you will know Mark Eve: Mark saw Christ in his wife Ruth’s character. It brought him to ask why, to find out more. Do you tell people what you’ve seen in them? Usually, we don’t think we’ve done anything at all – like Louise, we even think we’ve failed. The truth is, when we become Christians, God changes us. We become a new creation.

**Slide 9: Uni**

I became a Christian in my first year at University – I became convinced that this Gospel, this Jesus, was true and right, and I asked Jesus to be my Saviour, my Lord. Three weeks later, someone told me I’d changed: I’d stopped swearing. I had no idea: I was just trying to honour Jesus, and I hadn’t noticed how that had changed my behaviour. It’s God’s work, inside, often unconscious.

**Slide 10: Fruit**

One more time?...

**Slide 11: Empty Grid**

Ah – it’s blank! Test you again...

As we seek to Model Godly Character, we don’t just do it in our own strength, summoning up patience or kindness. We call on God for help. Shine out for Him!

**Slide 12: Galatians**

Galatians 5.16: “Live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. **17**For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh. They are in conflict with each other.”

Character is different to Personality. Personality is what makes you unique: being logical or creative, being chatty or thoughtful, impulsive or well-organised. Any of these can be either a godly character, or a worldly person: they’re morally-neutral. But the Fruit of the Spirit are the lovely qualities that God develops in us by His Spirit working in our hearts. We begin to Model Godly Character: not because we’re born with it, nor because we’ve tensed ourselves up and tried hard to be good; but because we’ve asked God to work in us.

Tom Wright describes this in his book “Virtue Reborn” as the task of the Christian on earth. We are practising to be like Jesus, getting ready for heaven, the process that was called ‘sanctification’ in previous generations. Tom Wright says this is like the film “Sully”, about Chesley B. Sullenberger, the American pilot who landed his airliner on the Hudson River and saved all the passengers’ lives. When the flock of birds stopped the jet engines soon after takeoff, Sully didn’t have time to look up what to do in the printed manuals, and he didn’t panic either. Because he had practised this again and again, he knew what to do already, and he was able to take the correct action quickly and decisively. Tom says Christians need to practise making Godly choices in daily life; so that when big crises come, or indeed when we meet Christ face to face, we have developed the virtues, the Godly Character, that He desires.

An old Cherokee told his grandson, “My child: inside us all, there is a battle between two wolves. One is evil: it is anger, jealousy, greed, resentment, inferiority, lies and ego. The other is good: it is joy, peace, love, hope, humility, kindness, empathy, and truth.”
The boy thought about it. “Grandfather, which wolf wins?”
The old man replied quietly, “The one you feed.”

Where does the rubber hit the road in your own life? What situations this week have made you call on God? What has tried your patience?

One last time, let’s say this verse together...

**Slide 13: Fruit**