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Dear all,

Briefing 9: Wednesday 15th April, 2020.

“The LORD has sworn by his right hand and by His mighty arm...” Isaiah 62:8

When God promises something, it always comes to pass. Sometimes not when we would like. Sometimes not in the way that we might imagine. But it always happens.

This verse comes from the passage we will be looking at on Sunday morning (Isaiah 62v1-63v6). It's a passage of hope and challenge, of glory and freedom and judgment and redemption. And like all of God's promises they are backed up by his unchanging faithfulness (*his character- his hand*) and his unfading power (*his mighty arm.*) Add to that the fact that God treats us with goodness and mercy, love and compassion, and we have 3 reasons to pray and seek the LORD and to trust him, even when we can't see a way out or imagine what the future holds.

But what should we pray?

As we saw on our Lent course, PRAY BIG, whilst our prayers are often earth bound- for healing and safety and material blessings; the prayers of the Apostles are far more concerned with our spiritual needs and our eternal hope. So whilst I would encourage you to continue to pray for all those serving in the health services, in the police force, in care homes and schools, in supermarkets and factories and distribution, as well as those in governments, we must not forget to pray for the state of our souls and our nation.

Let's put into practice what we have learned and pray bigger prayers that have an eternal perspective. Let's pray that we, as God's people, might be so captivated by God's love for us in Christ, by the hope of heaven, by the riches and power that are ours in Christ, so that we might be able to live and speak for Jesus. Let's pray that the hearts and souls of those in our families and streets and that people up and down our nation might be touched by God's Spirit and drawn to Jesus. Let's pray for the preaching of the Word of God over the internet that many people might hear of the hope we have and seek it for themselves. Let's pray that this time of struggle for our nation will be for the glory of God and the growth of his Kingdom. And let's pray that when we have opportunity, we might speak about the hope we have clearly and well. Those are BIG prayers, and the kind of prayers which God delights to answer.

THANK YOU

A HUGE thank you to everyone who contributed to the many services over Holy week, whether in word, music or technical prowess. The feedback has been excellent. Do keep your thoughts coming, remember to share what you see and comment on the YouTube and Facebook pages.

If you'd like to pray, read or be part of the music teams over the coming weeks, please, do get in touch with me. For readers and intercessors, you'd need to be able to record a short video of yourself and send it in 2-3 days before the service. For musicians, you'd need to be able to read the music and record your own part whilst listening to a pre-recorded track and then send it in.

THE LATEST VIDEOS...

This week the next of our Bite-Sized Bible, short introductions to books of the Bible, will be released. This time it's on the book of **James**. You can watch it, and all the previous Bite-Sized Bible episodes here:

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL1Dg22V0xM2bdfPpBZ06YbM3NEXZB0xxp>

And of course, if you missed any of our **Easter Services**, do take a look at the St Nicholas Church You Tube page or see the links on our websites and Facebook pages for details.

SERVICE DOWN A TELEPHONE LINE

A reminder that our '*service down a telephone line*' is now up and running. The message there will be updated every few days with Evening Prayer services and the Sunday sermon. Simply dial this **local number 01438 907143** (you'll need the area code as well), and listen. If you know of anyone not on the Internet who might find this service useful, please pass this telephone number onto them.

SOMETHING FOR YOUR SOUL...

If you are looking for something good and encouraging to watch with your children, why not try a new animated version of **John Bunyan's A Pilgrim's Progress**. There is a free link to watch it here. Simply click, register and enjoy. https://www.revelationmedia.com/watchpilgrims/?_thankyou=Y

The song for the week is here <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wX4ZCHRksBA> It's called **Jerusalem**- and you will remember it from the Easter service. Our own musicians have recorded a version and we'll be singing it ourselves on Sunday morning.

Jimmy and Katia Rocks are St Nicholas Mission partners working in Brazil through CMS. The lock down there has been in place for 4 weeks, causing huge difficulties for many of their congregation and their neighbours who live and work hand to mouth. You can watch their latest video and see how you might be able to help here: <https://youtu.be/bYJa4slLIGM>

REMINDERS...

PREVIOUS LETTERS AND INFORMATION: These can all be accessed via our websites or Facebook pages.

KEEPING IN TOUCH: Please do take up the **4UP/4DOWN** challenge and call people regularly and let me or Lynda Matthews (Pastoral Team leader) know of any concerns you have.

PRAYER: We are still gathering on Tuesday mornings from 7am to 8am for a virtual prayer meeting. If you'd like to join us, send me an email and I'll send you an invite.

NEED HELP? Do ask! We are a family after all. If you or a neighbour need help that you can't provide, contact Herts Help on 0300 123 4044 or via <https://www.hertshelp.net/hertshelp.aspx>.

WANT TO VOLUNTEER? See <https://www.goodsamapp.org/NHS> or <https://www.thvolunteering.org.uk/>

There will be another update next week, and there will be a new All-Age Family Worship released then too. Do watch out for them. In the meantime, may God bless you and your families, and may the LORD hear our prayers on behalf of our nation and our world.

Yours in Christ,

Dave