



Rev Dave Brown  
Rector of St Nicholas Stevenage & St Mary Graveley  
2a North Road, Stevenage. Herts. SG1 4AT  
Tel: 01438 213587  
Email: [revdmbrown@gmail.com](mailto:revdmbrown@gmail.com)



Dear all,

**Briefing 12: Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> May, 2020.**

*"They were looking for a better country – a heavenly one." Hebrews 11:16a*

This coming Friday is the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of VE Day, the day the German forces surrendered and the war in Europe was finally over. Of course the end of the war didn't come until later. In the UK we celebrate VJ day on August 15, but the formal Japanese surrender didn't happen until early September.

As we celebrate VE day we are not gloating over a defeated enemy, but celebrating what the sacrifice of so many people achieved. That victory came at a tremendous cost, but much was at stake. It was a victory over a brutally wicked and oppressive regime, a victory which brought an end to war and the hope of a brighter future. Those who fought bravely in our armed forces, risking, and often giving their lives, did so for that hope.

This coming Sunday we will be thinking about the Christian hope of heaven, or at least the final home of the Christian on the renewed and perfected earth. That's our true country. Most of us don't think very much about that. Perhaps we think we're too busy or we've believed the lie that one can be too heavenly-minded to be any earthly good. But the opposite is true: the more heavenly-minded we are, the more 'earthly good' we will be!

The more we are certain of the glory that awaits us, the less we will be concerned about the things of this world. The heavenly minded believer sees the true value of his treasure.

The more certain we are of the glory that awaits us, the more we are ready to risk things which do not last to gain treasure that lasts for eternity. The heavenly minded believer is an active, fearless servant.

The more we are certain of the glory that awaits us, the less we fear shame or embarrassment, or persecution for the sake of the gospel. The heavenly minded believer is a bold witness.

The more we are certain of the glory that awaits us, the lighter our hearts will be when we face times of struggle and pain. The heavenly minded believer knows that these things are only temporary.

And interestingly, the more we are certain of the glory that awaits us, the more we will enjoy life now. The heavenly minded believer knows that the good things in this life are mere tasters of the greater glory that awaits them in God's eternal kingdom. Every good thing points them to heaven!

Those who fought to defeat the Nazis and their allies did so on the hope of building a better country and a fairer world for their friends and families. In the book of Hebrews, chapter 11, the writer lists many champions of faith who, for the hope set before them, persevered, sometimes under extreme trials, because *"they were looking for a better country, a heavenly one."* The hope of a true home, a place of eternal peace and perfect rest and endless joy in the presence of God Almighty drove them to obedience and service and sacrifice. That same hope, and their example, should do the same for us. I wonder if it does.

This Sunday, we'll be considering the glory that awaits us when Jesus returns. If we are to be messengers of hope, we need to know that hope ourselves. If we are to stand tall and firm against the storms of life, we need to have that hope in our hearts, driving us on, filling our horizons. So as we head towards Sunday, will you pray with me that we all might know this hope in true measure? We have a far better country to look forward to. May we see it, grasp it, glory in it and walk confidently towards it.

Yours in Christ,

*Dave*

## **READING FOR SUNDAY**

If you want to read the passage ahead of Sunday, it is Isaiah 65:17 to 25. You might also like to read Revelation chapters 21 and 22, 1 Corinthians chapter 15 and John 14 verses 1 – 7.

## **MEN'S VIRTUAL BREAKFAST...**

Fellas, we can't meet at the Standing Order for the full fry up and chat, but we can still meet... and try to outdo each other with the biggest home-made bacon sandwich! We're meeting via ZOOM from 8:30am on Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> May. If you'd like an invitation, please email Mike Wilton on [mikewilton@hotmail.com](mailto:mikewilton@hotmail.com).

## **WOMEN'S VIRTUAL BREAKFAST...**

Not to be outdone, the women are also gathering for a virtual breakfast at 9am on Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> May. For more details and a link to join in contact Evelyn on [evelynjohnson86@hotmail.com](mailto:evelynjohnson86@hotmail.com) or tel: 07717 796401.

## **SOMETHING FOR YOUR SOUL...**

**The song for the week** is a wonderful hymn, **Amazing Grace**, performed by the musicians and singers of St Andrew the Great in Cambridge. Look out for the recognisable singer! <https://youtu.be/aE16N62mC7w>

**Books! The Essential Jonathan Edwards:** I've been blessed and challenged as I've listened to this book over the past couple of weeks (It's available as an audio book!) Edwards is described as America's greatest pastor and theologian and the book is a great way to start to get to know the man and his work. It's available from <https://www.amazon.co.uk/Essential-Jonathan-Edwards-Introduction-Theologian-ebook/dp/B076BF8ZHC>

A reminder too of the great deals on our partner book dealer: 10ofthose.com. Check them out by clicking on this link: <https://www.10ofthose.com/uk/themes/bbtb-special-recommendations>

## **THE LATEST VIDEOS...**

Due to my short break- there's been no **all age family worship service** or **Bite-Sized Bible** this week. Do check out our YouTube page for any you have missed. You will however find some great content on Speak Life, including a fascinating interview with Rachel Gilson, the author of a book on my reading list called **Born Again This Way**. She has a great testimony to share. Do take a look: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WqTYosrgNq0>

## **REMINDERS...**

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

If you'd like to lead the **PRAYERS** or do the **BIBLE READING** for our on-line service, please get in touch!

**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.

**SERVICE DOWN A TELEPHONE LINE:** A reminder that our '*service down a telephone line*' is now up and running. The message 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.

**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/>