 **Briefing 24: Wednesday 29th July, 2020.**

Dear friends,

Despite being a life-long Luton Town fan, I’ve only ever prayed once at a football match. It was at the Littlewoods Cup Final in 1988 when Luton scored twice in the last 5 minutes to beat Arsenal 3-2!

Given that my prayers were answered that day, you might think I should have prayed for the team more often, not least because there have been many times when they certainly needed it! But when Jesus teaches us to pray, he tells us to have our focus not on earthly or footballing glory, but on God. Cheering on our football or rugby team, or the national sides, might be great fun, but far more important, and far more worthy, is that we pray the next part of the Lord’s Prayer: **Hallowed Be Your Name**.

This phrase isn’t really about keeping God’s name special, i.e. not using it as a swear word or expletive- although as Christians we should always refrain from that. When Jesus mentions God’s name here, he’s using Biblical shorthand as a way of summing up all that God is – his qualities, character, majesty, might and power. So this part of the prayer is about God receiving the recognition and praise that he is due.

It’s a line that can be said as a prayer of praise – *Your name, O Lord, is Holy! How awesome and glorious and mighty you are! You are worthy of my praise!* Or it can be said as a prayer of petition (asking): *Lord, open my eyes, and open the eyes of those in my family, in our town, across the country and across the world, to see you for who you are, to grasp your greatness and to fall at your feet in worship.*

What might that look like? Well having begun by praying to our Heavenly Father and revelling in the access we have to God and the wonder that we can address him in this way, one might go on and pray something like this. Then, having read it, why not have a go praying your own prayer from this phrase.

*Hallowed be your name.*

*Heavenly Father, it’s such a privilege to be able to pray to you, knowing that you love me and have rescued me through Jesus. But I pray Lord, that the wonder of your grace may never blind me to your awesome majesty and might. I praise you, LORD that there is no one like you. You are the creator of the all things and you sustain all things by your powerful word, and I praise and worship you for the beauty of the world you have made. You are sovereign and king, directing history, nations, rulers, even the things in my life, to your perfect ends, and I thank you for the comfort that knowledge brings. You are righteous and true, holy and upright, so you have the right to hold all people to account. Thank you that you will one day judge the world with righteousness, and that the world will rejoice to see your perfect justice.*

*You are eternal, all knowing, ever present, unchanging, immutable, indivisible, one God in 3 persons. You are beyond my understanding yet I ask, heavenly Father, that you might help me grasp more of your greatness, your holiness, majesty and might, that in my life, your name might be truly hallowed. Would I, like the apostle Paul, count everything loss except knowing you. Would pursuing your glory, be my greatest glory. Would seeing others praise you be my greatest joy. Renew my mind Lord, change my heart Lord, that my life, my words, my thoughts, my actions, will show more of your glory and majesty to the world.*

*And so I pray Lord for the world, for our country, for our town, my neighbours and family, that amongst all those you have made, your name would be hallowed, honoured, worshipped and obeyed. Reveal yourself I pray, through the preaching of your word, through the witness of your people, through creation, through dreams and visions, through whatever means you choose to use, that many others would see you as you are. Heavenly Father so many people today worship false gods- whether idols in temples or hobbies or material things or relationships or experiences. May they come to see the folly of worshipping those things instead of you, all glorious and mighty, all-powerful creator God. In your mercy, reveal yourself to these lost, wandering sheep, that your fame and honour would continue to grow until the earth is filled with the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea. Hallowed be your name, Father. Amen.*

**OTHER NEWS:**

**A DESIRE FOR FURTHER STUDY?**

In 2 weeks’ time we’ll be looking at the importance of reading and studying God’s Word as the indispensable means to growing in our faith. We can do that on our own, of course, and we do it on Sundays and in home groups, but if you feel you’d benefit from a structured course, there are plenty of opportunities to do that. Here are two options to think about.

Jacky Swanson, who is part of our St Nicholas Church Family, is just coming to the end of her first year of study with the **Kings School of Theology**. The website (<https://kingstheology.org/> ) provides details of the course options, study weekends, prices etc.  There is also an easy to read blog written by a student which gives a nice summary. You can find that here: (<https://kingstheology.org/2017/07/04/study-theology-couldnt/> ).

There is an online 'Taster Session' on Sat 22nd Aug (10 - 11 am) available to give a chance to meet the tutors etc. and there are also Taster Days and Single Lectures available on the website to give an idea of what the teaching is like. Jacky would be very happy to talk to anyone who may be interested.

My old college, **Oak Hill**, based in Southgate, is now also offering a range of study modules on topics ranging from church history to Christian doctrine to world mission to those on a pastoral theme. This year they will be delivered on line. The teaching will be excellent. Take a look here: <https://www.oakhill.ac.uk/flexible-learning/modules>

**UPDATE FROM PCC MEETINGS**:

Graveley PCC met on Saturday 25th July. Amongst other things we…

* Reviewed services and safety measures under the current Covid regime.
* Discussed planned repairs to the building and upkeep of the churchyard.
* Reviewed how tax efficient donations can be made in church (*only those of more than £30 need to be placed in an envelope)* and renewed our encouragement for all regular givers to set up standing orders.
* Booked our Harvest Festival for 13th September and our APCM for 27th September, after the morning service.

St Nicholas PCC met on Tuesday 28th July. Amongst other things we…

* Discussed the building works and the items still needing to be done.
* Decided to mark the completion with a low-key open day on Saturday 13th September, 10am-4pm. More details to follow.
* Restarted our discussions on our new Mission Action Plan focusing on the church as a place of welcome to the community, the church as a place of worship, discipleship and learning, and the church as a base for mission and evangelism across the parish.
* Booked our Harvest Festival for 13th September and our APCM for 20th September, after the morning service
* Agreed to act as a local collection centre for Operation Christmas Child this winter.

**THIS COMING SUNDAY**, we will be focusing on the work of the Holy Spirit to change us and equip us for service and witness. Philip Walker will be preaching at the 9:30am service at St Nicholas and Rev Christine Hina will be preaching and presiding at the Holy Communion service at St Mary’s at 11:30am. The Bible readings for the day will be Galatians 5:13-26 and Luke 24:36-49. Why not read them before you come along to church, and do make sure you bring your own Bible with you!

If you are yet to book in, you can do so here: [https://forms.gle/BftgkJUk4jt6iKY28](https://forms.gle/BftgkJUk4jt6iKY28?fbclid=IwAR1cAD2yosnKWAHGT4Lb2PxoI_WUEAqWWBgOn0Hzt_qiW2yYteFfaiEdXVw) If you’re not able to make it, do make sure you join us either live on Facebook or catch up later.

As I’m away for the next week, there won’t be another update letter until Wednesday 12th August.

In the meantime, do keep me, the PCC’s, and all our church family in your prayers.

Yours in Christ,

*Dave*