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**Briefing 50: Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> February, 2021.**

Dear friends,

I started writing these briefings during the 1<sup>st</sup> lockdown, and today's the 50<sup>th</sup> edition. I don't think any of us thought that it would last this long, and sadly, we're not done yet! It has, as our Facebook advert puts it, been a bleak year. The cost in human lives, to our government finances, to businesses, to the education of our children and young people, to our mental health and well-being has been enormous. And we may not know the full cost for many years.

But in the midst of all this pain and uncertainty, suffering and frustration, we have good news to share. Good news of a God who loves us and who gave himself for us. Good news of a God who is in control, however things look. Good news of a God of compassion, who binds up the broken-hearted and comforts the grieving. Good news for the future, of a glorious kingdom where pain and suffering, death and disease, loss and loneliness are no more.

But that good news needs to be shared, or people will never hear. Invitations need to be given, or people will never come. And where people are reluctant or nervous about accepting, they need to be encouraged, and perhaps even carried along, so that they can hear and receive the good news that God has for them in Jesus. So please, however nervous you might be at sharing the good news, push past those fears and think of those who need to hear it. And since sharing our faith is God's work, put some time aside to pray- there are some opportunities over the page.

Sharing our faith is a command of God. It is how his kingdom grows. It is how people hear of Jesus. So share the adverts widely and invite your friends and family to some of these events. They can only say no! And if they say yes, you may have the privilege of being the one who brought them to Jesus.

#### **New City Catechism Question 6: How can we glorify God?**

Back in question four, (how and why did God create us?), we found that we were made to know him, love him, live with him and glorify him. Question 6 asks how do we glorify God? And the answer?

***We glorify God by enjoying him, loving him, trusting him, and by obeying his will, commands and law.***

It would be very easy to concentrate on the last 3 statements of the answer and to think that all we need to do to glorify God, to show him the honour and worth he deserves, is by obeying his will, commands and law. But to think that way is to think very much like a Pharisee, that God is only interested in our behaviour, and that as long as we do 'the right things' he will be for us.

But God is not just interested in our behaviour. He wants us. He covets our love, our worship, and devotion. We were made to know him and enjoy him forever. And so offering God nothing more than loveless ritual obedience will not only leave us empty, frustrated and distant from God, it will do nothing to give God the glory that he deserves. So our obedience must come from a heart of love, praise and worship, or it is worth nothing.

So how do we grow in our love of God, our enjoyment of God, or our trust in God? The best place to start is to focus on God's great love for us. And whilst the glory of creation might reflect God's power, creativity and majesty, the prime example of his love for us is the Lord Jesus, and particularly his sacrifice for us on the cross. If we think and meditate on that, remembering that God loved us and gave himself for us despite how sinful we are, how helpless, wretched and rebellious we are, then our hearts will grow in love and worship towards God.

And as we understand more of his love, we will slowly realise that God has given his laws and commands to us out of that same love. God's laws and commands are there as part of his loving care; not to hinder our fun, but to protect us and bless us. And so our obedience to God becomes a means by which we can enjoy God's blessings, whilst at the same time, demonstrating our love for him, as we walk the path of obedience our gracious and loving Father has set before us. It isn't always an easy path; our old self will fight us all the way. But it is the path of joy, for us and God.

Yours in Christ,

*Dave*

# IMPORTANT STUFF – DON’T JUST GLANCE- TAKE IT ALL IN!

## THE GOOD NEWS ON-LINE CORNHILL

**MISSION:** the programme is now in place for our on-line mission which will take place from 15<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup> February.

Attached to this letter are flyers for the mission as a whole (this one) and for each individual event, so that you can email them to friends and family when you invite them along.

You'll also find them on our Facebook page together with a **short video ad**. PLEASE take a look, like and share widely.

We've also created a page on the St Nicholas website with all these flyers. Do, please, invite people to come along with you to these events. We have good news to share, so let us share it boldly.

## GOOD NEWS!

**It's been a bleak year.  
So much has changed.  
So much is uncertain.  
But there is GOOD NEWS.  
Right now.  
Today.  
For you.  
In Jesus Christ.  
We'd love to tell you more...  
So why not tune-in to our week of  
GOOD NEWS EVENTS  
And hear the  
GOOD NEWS for yourself.  
Oh, and here's more good news ...  
Everything is free!**

St Nicholas Church Stevenage. Email [enquiries@saintnicholaschurch.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@saintnicholaschurch.org.uk) or Tel 01438 213587

Monday 15th-Sunday 21st February

Every day: Good News Treasure Hunt for kids in the St Nicholas Church Yard. (Instructions + cards in the Lych Gate)  
Lunchtimes at 1pm Tuesday-Friday: Interviews + discussions on Facebook Live. People telling their stories and explaining how Jesus is good news even in times of uncertainty, suffering, chaos and death.

Thursday evening 7:30pm: Women's event. Good news for body, mind and soul: An evening of interviews, chat, discussion, stories and practical talks. On Zoom. Contact us for a link.

Friday evening 7:30pm: Good News Quiz.

Some light-hearted quizzing fun with a message of good news in the middle. On Zoom. Contact us for a link.

Saturday morning 8:30am: Men's Virtual Breakfast: AI-the Hope or Doom of Mankind? Bring your own coffee and breakfast and hear from an expert in AI research. On Zoom. Contact us for a link.

Sunday morning at 9:30am: Join us live from St Nicholas Church (in person or on YouTube) to hear how Jesus is the Good News we truly need to hear.

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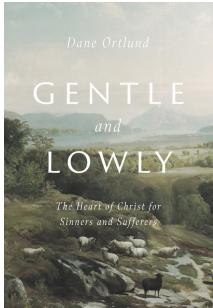
**COME AND PRAY TOGETHER! TOMORROW** - Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> February at 7.30pm we will be gathering to pray for our coming Cornhill Mission and Rachael and Bernie - our Crosslinks mission partners in Uganda. We will be joined by some of the Cornhill mission team and a representative of Crosslinks. **Contact Dave for a link.**

We also want to encourage you to pray daily for our good news mission. Some ideas are below. Why not try to set aside 15 minutes a day from today until the end of next week to pray for the events, the speakers, for those you are inviting, and for all those who come. We have a God who hears and answers prayer and who delights to save sinners. Let's call out to him, and ask him to be at work for only he can save.

If you want to pray in church, St Nicholas will be open for private prayer for 3 sessions a week: Tuesdays from 2 – 4pm, Wednesdays 12 noon – 2pm, and Thursdays 10am – 12 noon. Why not go along and pray there?

If you want to pray with others, then there will be online ZOOM prayer gatherings next Tuesday (16<sup>th</sup>) from 7am – 8am, and then on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday mornings from 7:30am-8am. Contact Dave for a link. You might also want to get together with a friend, on a walk or over the phone, and pray with them.

But however we do it; let's be people of prayer. Let us earnestly seek God and ask that he might move by his Holy Spirit and bring people to him.



**LENT COURSE:** I have a few spare copies of both the main book (£9) and plenty of spare copies of the study guide (£1). Extra copies of the book can be purchased through [www.10ofthose.com](http://www.10ofthose.com) and other book stores.

*If you are not yet in a home group and would like the opportunity to discuss the chapters through Lent, please do let me know. Eunice Sirkett has kindly offered to run a home group for Graveley church, but since we're meeting online, you can join whichever group you like. Speak to me or one of our home group leaders for more details.*

**ASH WEDNESDAY:** Lent begins next week, but sadly we will not be holding a special Ash Wednesday service. However, from Wednesday morning there will be a short, pre-recorded service available on our YouTube channel.

**CHILDREN'S WORK ON SUNDAYS:** Under tiers 4 and 5, we are unable to hold separate children's work in church. However, activity packs will be available to tie in with the talk and the question from the New City Catechism, so do bring your children along. We love to see them and they are a treasured part of our family. Our children's work will recommence once schools reopen.