



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)



Briefing 64: Tuesday 18th May, 2021.

Dear Friends,

After 2 weeks away from work, including a week in a cottage at the far west of Cornwall, it was great to be back with you on Sunday. We still can't sing - and there's no news yet on when that might be possible, but it is so good to meet together. Our difficulty at the moment at St Nicholas is that we are limited with space, and on a number of occasions people have not been able to book in. We are looking at ways to safely increase our capacity slightly, but in the meantime, if you are not able to book in at St Nicholas, why not consider coming across to St Marys Graveley. It's a beautiful church; you'll usually hear the same sermon, and you'll receive a very warm welcome.

The thought of worshipping in a different building on a particular Sunday can be a difficult one to cope with. We are very often creatures of habit. We know what we like, and we like what we know, and so change, sometimes even small changes, can seem rather frightening. But that's not just true with changing what we do on a Sunday. It's also true in our relationship with God. We settle into a pattern. It suits our lifestyle. So we don't rock the boat.

There are times when being contented is a really good thing. In **Philippians 4:12** Paul, writing from prison, said this: *I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want.* If we could learn to be content like that, I'm sure we would all be far happier for it, and far more generous with all that was left over. What a difference that would make to the world and to the mission of the church!

But there are times when being content with our current experience is actually a bad thing. Being content to suffer toothache because we are frightened of going to the dentist is no way to live. Being content with not speaking to members of our family because we are too proud to apologise, is a denial of the gospel. And being content with a Christian life devoid of real joy or hope or of power to change, and without an intimacy with and an experience of God's amazing love is, no way to follow Jesus. CS Lewis described it as settling for mud pies in the garden, when we were invited to a feast laid in the banqueting hall of the King.

I wonder if that might describe your Christian experience at the moment. Are you content to exist on spiritual crumbs because you are too nervous to draw near? Are you content to keep God at arm's length because you are not sure whether you can trust him with your life and you fear what changes he might bring about or what he might ask you to do? If that's how you feel, then I do understand. I have spent a good proportion of my Christian life feeling exactly like that: Trying to walk a tightrope between following Jesus and seeking all the world has to offer. The problem is that walking a tight rope is a very stressful place to be. You don't ever really feel content with the world, because this world will never be able to give us the peace, joy, love and contentment we seek. And your Christian life is never truly fulfilling, because the only way to enjoy a deeper communion with God is to leave the tightrope and jump.

Fortunately, wonderfully, our Heavenly Father has a safe pair of hands, love beyond measure, grace without limit, unfading strength and plans for us that are far beyond anything we can dream or imagine. Jesus offers us a spring of water welling up to eternal life. He offers us true bread from heaven, a life of true satisfaction. And he gives us himself, his Holy Spirit, to live in us, and to be at work through us for our good and for his greater glory.

And the door is open. The invitation is there. All we need to do is come.

There will be consequences. Our lives will change. We may face storms, challenges, perhaps even persecution as we follow Jesus. But Jesus didn't promise us an easy life, he promised us a life that goes on for eternity. It's a life lived in the presence of the King and creator of the world, under the Lordship of our saviour Jesus, by the power of the Holy Spirit. This extraordinary offer is the life we were made for. Let us not settle for anything less.

Grace and peace...

Dave

Come + pray!

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

WEDNESDAY NIGHT- BENEFICE PRAYER GATHERING: 7:45PM-9PM VIA ZOOM. JOIN US TO PRAY FOR THE CHURCH, THE WORLD, OUR MISSION PARTNERS AND ONE ANOTHER. CONTACT DAVE FOR A LINK.

Saturday night at St Nicks from 7pm-9pm. Come and join us for a pre-Pentecost evening of praise (outside) + prayer (inside). Our focus will be praying for God's Holy Spirit to move in us and across this town that we might know more of God's love and power in our lives and see many brought to Jesus.

Private Prayer in St Nicholas church THIS WEEK.

Tuesday (18th) from 2pm-4pm, Wednesday (19th) 12noon-2pm and Thursday (20th) 10am – 12 noon.

Then next Tuesday from 7am-8am. Our regular early morning prayer meeting. Contact Dave for a link.

LITTLE LAMBS – The St Nicholas mums and toddlers' group, meeting Friday mornings from 9am-10:30am, will be restarting towards the end of May under the leadership of Jeannette Parker. Might you be keen to come along, or be part of the team? Jeannette would also love to hear from anyone who'd be willing to join a rota to provide refreshments. Could you serve in this way? If so, contact Jeannette on enquiries@saintnicholaschurch.org.uk Thank you!

CONFIRMATION SERVICE: On Monday 7th June, St Nicholas is hosting a confirmation service for the deanery where 2 of our young people (Isaac Amuzu and Lauren Kaahwa) will be confirmed. Do please pray for them (and 3 candidates from St Mary's Shephall) as they make this public confession of faith in Jesus. We will need volunteers to act as welcomers, musicians and singers, ppt and sound engineers that night. If you can help in this way do speak to me or Mike or Karen.

An Invitation to Grow a Good and Beautiful Christian Life

A 10-session course designed to help you grow in knowledge, understanding and practice as a follower of Jesus.

Starting end of June 2021 and running on alternate Wednesday nights (7:30pm-9:30pm), each week will include direct teaching, discussion, prayer, with follow-up exercises and further reading to do before each session.

The course will have 5 elements:

Bible Teaching. Christian Doctrine. Practical Discipleship. Prayer. Encouragement.

Speak to Dave for more details or to register your interest.



Developing your Christian Discipleship

A FREE BOOK...! *When God Comes to Church* by Ray Ortlund explores what the Bible teaches about revival. He explains what God can do to revive his people and what we must do to prepare ourselves for revival. Ortlund's conclusions provide solid guidance for church leaders and lay people who long for renewal and revival from God. I'm really enjoying the book- why not download it and read it too? [When God Comes to Church - Renewal Ministries](#)

2 SONGS TO WARM YOUR HEART! This Sunday our passage is about Jesus' welcoming those whom society rejects and treats as worthless. That's a sentiment summed up in these wonderful 2 songs, the first of which has a bit of a Christmas feel, the second a vibrant Celtic beat. [\(17\) O Come, All You Unfaithful | Sovereign Grace Music - YouTube](#) [\(17\) STUART TOWNSEND-VAGABONDS - YouTube](#)