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Briefing 65: Wednesday 26th May, 2021.

Dear Friends,

One of the surprising sports phenomena of recent years has been the rising popularity of MMA or mixed martial arts. Perhaps you are a fan, a number of people I follow on Twitter are, and so I sometimes see coverage of fights and pictures of the victors and often badly bruised and blooded losers. Personally, while I quite enjoy watching boxing, MMA is too violent for my liking. I can appreciate the power and fearlessness of the fighters, who really are putting their bodies on the line, but I much prefer the slow pace of a baseball game or the passion of a well-contested football or rugby match to the brutal and sometimes vicious bouts in the octagon cage.

But reading through the New Testament it's hard not to notice that the Christian life is often described in similarly violent terms. Just take a look at these verses.

*1 Timothy 6:12 **Fight** the good **fight** of the faith.*

*2 Corinthians 10:4 The **weapons** we **fight** with ... have divine power to **demolish** strongholds.*

*Ephesians 6:12 For our **struggle** is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.*

*Hebrews 12:4 In your **struggle** against sin, you have not yet **resisted** to the point of **shedding your blood**.*

*Colossians 3:5 **Put to death**, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature..*

Perhaps you think those were different days, and to some extent you'd be right. Unlike Christians then, and Christians in many places around the world today, believers in the UK don't face outright persecution, fear of imprisonment, torture or death for following Jesus. But make no mistake about it, we are still in a battle. And if we do not press on, struggle, fight and resist the ungodly influences of the world, the pull of our sinful nature and the attacks of the evil one, we will find ourselves either losing our faith or, at the very least, living unproductive Christian lives. The current of our unchristian culture will sweep us away unless we stand firm, fight, resist and press on.

Whether we like to think in those terms or not, the Christian life is a battle. And perhaps if it doesn't feel like it, it's because we've already given up the fight or are lying wounded on the field. Interestingly, the treatment for both is the same. Prayer: Scripture: Fellowship and Active Service. Those are the duties of all in the service of King Jesus.

The church has been passive for too long. We've let our faith become private and have let our lives become shaped more by the world than God's Word. That's not how we are commanded to live. It's time to re-join the fray.

Grace and peace...

Dave

*Ps: If would like to up your training regime and improve your spiritual fitness, do consider joining the **discipleship course**.*

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

Friday night at St Nicks from 8pm-10pm. Come and join us and pray 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 from 2pm-4pm, Wednesday 12noon-2pm and Thursday 10am – 12 noon.

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

ADVANCED NOTICE: BENEFICE PRAYER GATHERING WEDNESDAY 16TH JUNE: 7:45PM-9PM VIA ZOOM. JOIN US AND REP FROM THE BARNABAS FUND WHO SUPPORT PERSECUTED CHRISTIANS AROUND THE WORLD TO PRAY FOR THE CHURCH, THE WORLD, OUR MISSION PARTNERS AND ONE ANOTHER. CONTACT DAVE FOR A LINK.

Come + pray!

LITTLE LAMBS – The St Nicholas mums and toddlers' group, meeting Friday mornings from 9am-10:30am, will be restarting on **Friday 11th June** 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.or.uk

CONFIRMATION SERVICE: On Monday 7th June at 7:30pm, 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. **Please note... We still need welcomers, and a ppt/sound engineer.** 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 30-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

Some comments from the last cohort:

I found it very interesting, also challenging in that it stretched our mental and spiritual muscles. I found it strengthened my faith and has been very worthwhile. Chris Taplin

The discipleship course enabled me to have time where I could look to know God in a deeper way and it was not just the material that enabled this, but also meeting with the other guys who were committed to the course and each other. I do believe it deepened my relationship and knowledge of God and one result was my wanting to read and understand His word more. Mike Wilton.

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](#)

GOVERNOR VACANCY: St Nicholas Primary School is looking for a foundation governor (someone who is a member of a local church with a strong Christian faith) Is God calling you to serve this way? Please see Dave **ASAP** for details.

NEWS FROM ST NICHOLAS PCC: Last night St Nicholas PCC met and received various reports, and spent some time...

1. Agreeing to pursue the appointment of a children, youth and family's worker during the early summer of 2022 and discussing the next steps to take in that process.
2. Discussing and approving our Fire Safety Procedures. These will be communicated to group leaders and training will follow. At some point a fire drill will be carried out during a morning service.
3. Began to discuss the question 'what kind of church are we?' We discussed our values, strengths and tried to categorise our style of gathered worship. We highlighted our commitment to teaching and applying the Bible faithfully and clearly, our clear but relaxed liturgical style, and noted with delight how diverse a church we are in age, education, ethnicity and previous church background (incl Baptists, Roman Catholics + Orthodox believers).