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Briefing 90: Wednesday 17th November, 2021.

Dear friends,

This week we come to the end of our series in the Pastoral Epistles. These letters, written by Paul to Timothy and Titus, have certainly given us a lot to mull over. I wonder how you have found it? They have reminded us of the importance of the true gospel message, because false teachers can lead us astray. They have instructed us about the qualifications for church leaders, both in character and doctrine, because if someone has a position of authority it doesn't mean they will necessarily be teaching or living out the truth. And they have challenged us about our own way of life, because those who accept and believe the gospel need to become gospel-shaped people, living "*self-controlled, upright and godly lives while we wait for the blessed hope – the appearing of the glory of our God and Saviour, Jesus Christ.*" Titus 2:12b-13.

What has stood out for you so far? How will your life be different because of what you've heard?

Because that should be the case, shouldn't it? As disciples of Jesus, we are commanded to take up our cross and follow him. That is a call to action, to change, to a new way of life. Yet so often, what we believe in our heads fails to trickle down to our hearts and lives.

These days, the word **follower** simply means that you receive somebody's posts. It doesn't imply any connection or relationship to them. Nor does it imply any agreement with what they say, let alone any commitment to their agenda or to going where they lead. But as disciples of Jesus, we are called to actively follow him, walking in his footsteps; having his priorities as our priorities; his standards as our standards; his life as the pattern for our life. That requires self-denial – putting Jesus on the throne of our life, centring our lives around him. It demands self-sacrifice – turning away from sinful patterns of behaviour, serving and loving and giving willingly and generously. And it involves changing the way we think so that our thoughts are submitted to his perfect thoughts, our ideas and values shaped and directed by his true word.

So as you reflect on these things, what kind of a follower are you? Have you simply received what God has said to us through Paul but will take no notice of it? Or are you a true disciple of Jesus, one who follows their Lord and King wherever he leads, and whatever the cost?

Grace and peace,

Dave

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

PRAYER GATHERING TONIGHT: 7:45PM IN ST NICHOLAS CHURCH. We'll begin with sung worship, hear from God's word and spend time praying for our personal renewal, the mission and outreach of the church, the world, our government and those in need. Come in person or ask for a Zoom link to join online.

THE CHRISTMAS JOURNEY: We are hosting Bridgebuilder's Christmas Journey again this year from Tuesday 7th – Friday 10th December. The rota is now full, but please pray for the team, the children, their teachers and the homes to which these children will carry back the wonderful good news of Jesus.

OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD: if you have boxes to go – please bring them along to church this week or next Sunday morning. Remember! You can also pack and pay for a box online!

Prayer is the engine room of the church. It's how we show we are dependent on God, and the means through which God works in his church and world. WON'T YOU COME AND JOIN US?

Tuesday mornings 7am-8am: 23/11, 30/11, 7/12
Wednesday evenings 7:45pm-9pm: TONIGHT, 1/12, 15/12

Private Prayer in St Nicholas church THIS WEEK and NEXT WEEK.

Tuesday 16th from 2pm-4pm, Wednesday 17th from 12noon-2pm, + Thursday 18th from 10am - 12noon.
Tuesday 23rd from 2pm-4pm, Wednesday 24th from 12noon-2pm, + Thursday 25th from 10am - 12noon.

“Our Father in Heaven... I'm afraid I'm lost for words!”

LEARNING TO PRAY OUT LOUD

ONE FINAL CHANCE! The 3-week course is now a two-week course! Last week's 1st session will be repeated **this Sunday afternoon between 4-5pm**, with the 2nd session on Sunday 5th of December from 5-6pm.

If you lack confidence, or have never uttered a word out loud with prayer, then this is for you. Sessions will be very practical. You'll need a pen and a Bible. Just let Dave know that you'll be coming.

FOOD DONATIONS - Chris Taplin has recently got involved with a new initiative run by the Barnabas Fund called **Food.gives** which gets dry non-perishable food stuffs to persecuted Christians abroad. They send you a kit to make up boxes + stickers etc, which you then fill with dry foods such as flour, lentils etc. No liquid, glass or cans allowed, and sell by dates must have at least 10 months life. Chris has just filled his 1st box and taken it to a local shop where DHL picked it up. It is super easy and can literally mean life or starvation to people in poor parts of the world. His kit only took about 5 days to arrive with full instructions. You can send boxes on a monthly basis or just donate money to **Food.gives**. If you need further details you can contact **Food.gives** on 02476 231923 or try their website

GOING DEEPER: SHOULD ONLY MEN LEAD CHURCHES AND PREACH? Following the recent sermon on 1 Timothy 2 and 3 a few weeks ago, both PCCs have suggested a follow up session to examine the Biblical material in more detail and to allow time for questions and discussion. This will held be **on Sunday 28th November from 7pm**. There's no need to book, but if you are interested in coming, please let Dave know.



GRACE COMMUNITY CHURCH - 18-30s Social: Saturday 27th November from 6:30 – 9pm at Grace Community Church, Hydean Way – come along for a fun evening with a version of 'The Cube' – drinks and desserts provided! Please let Matthew & Jo Dear know on enquiries@saintnicholaschurch.org.uk if you'd like to attend so they have an idea of numbers. FLYER ATTACHED.

BIBLE BY THE BEACH: In the few years prior to Covid, a good number of us from St Nicholas took a few days away over the first May Bank Holiday to attend the Bible By The Beach convention in Eastbourne. Judy and I will be attending again this year, and wondered if anyone would like to join us for a weekend of great Bible teaching on the English Riviera, with the sung worship led by All Souls Orchestra and fellowship. There's a full programme of fun and teaching for children too. Details are here! [Bible by the Beach 2022 - Bible by the Beach](#) and there are flyers in church. If you would like to go, do let Dave know. If there are 10 or more of us, we can get a group discount. *Please note: the ticket price doesn't include your food or accommodation; you will need to organize and pay for that as well.*

EVENTS IN THE COMING DAYS

ST NICHOLAS DOOR-TO-DOOR TEAM: The team has paused its door-to-door visits, but they will now be running a hot chocolate stand on Thursday afternoons between 3 and 4 PM. Please pray for their conversations with our 1st role walkers, and schoolchildren on their way home.

READINGS FOR THE NEXT FEW WEEKS: The readings for the next 3 weeks are as follows:

21st November: Titus 3: 1-15

28th November: Revelation 1:4-18

5th December: 1 John 4:7–12

ST NICHOLAS DAY: Once again this year we will be singing carols at the St Nicholas shops as part of the St Nicholas Day celebrations on Saturday 4th December! More details nearer the time, but do save the date.

WELWYN GARDEN CITY BRASS BAND- Christmas Concert in aid of **Bridgebuilders Christian Trust**. Saturday 4th December, in St Nicholas Church. Tickets £7:50- pay on the door. I now have volunteers to steward and serve refreshments. But please do come along and invite your friends.