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**Briefing 116: Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> May, 2022.**

Dear friends,

Although Jesus spent some 40 days with his disciples between his resurrection and his ascension into Heaven, we don't have details for all of his resurrection appearances. For example, in 1 Corinthians 15:6 Paul writes that on one occasion, Jesus appeared to *"More than 500 of the brothers and sisters at the same time, most of whom are (at the time he was writing, obviously) still alive, though some have fallen asleep."*

It's an amazing verse for two important reasons.

Firstly, because this is all we know about this appearance of Jesus. None of the gospel writers mention it and even Paul refrains from giving us many details. It's one of those passages that reminds us that however much we think we know about the life and works of Jesus; we still know just a fraction. But what we have been given is written to increase our faith and show us the certainty of the things we have been taught and now believe. That's where the second implication comes in.

Secondly, the clear implication of Paul's words is that if any of his first readers had any doubts about the resurrection of Jesus, they could go and speak to those who were there, and who had seen him with their own eyes. Some had died, including some of the 12 disciples, but many were still alive at the time Paul was writing and were real, living, first-hand witnesses to the resurrection of Jesus.

Ours is a sceptical world, or it is when it comes to things of faith. When people are faced with the claims of the Christian faith, they often demand a greater level of proof, first-hand experience or concrete evidence than they do for many other things they hold to be true. But when we are investigating historic claims, we can't expect the same sort of evidence that a court of law might demand when they look for evidence today. However, that isn't to say that there is no evidence. It's just different.

And here we have a giant piece of evidence, because very clearly, Paul is saying to those sceptics alive at the time he was writing that real, first-hand proof of Jesus' resurrection did exist. They just had to find one of the 500 people those who saw the resurrected Jesus and ask them!

On my first Easter Sunday here, we had a special visitor come to church. But before he arrived and walked down the aisle and shook my hand, I blind-folded a member of our congregation and covered their ears with headphones so they would see and hear nothing. But everyone else saw. And whilst my willing volunteer was reluctant to believe who had come in when 1 and 2 and even 12 people told her what they had seen; when the whole congregation stood and gave witness, she had no choice but to believe.

Jesus was seen by 1s and 2s and the 12 and then 500 people at one time. And if we had been alive at the time Paul wrote his letter, we could have questioned them ourselves. Instead, we have Paul's witness of what they saw and what he had seen. Evidence that proves that Jesus is Risen!

Are you convinced by that I wonder? And have you thought through the implications for you and all those you meet? If not, perhaps the 2 new courses on the opposite page might be a good place to start...

Grace and peace,

*Dave*

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



A chance to celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee together!  
Why not ask your neighbours and friends to come down to church with you and enjoy the afternoon with you?

If you can help with serving teas, baking scones or supervising the treasure hunt (which will be like the one we did at Easter) please do let us know.

## THINKING THROUGH FAITH... (see advert above right)

Hope Explored and Christianity Explored courses are starting in early June, both in the Lower Parish Room at St Nicholas. Trailers for the courses can be found here: [\(337\) Christianity Explored Official Guest Trailer - YouTube](#) and here: [\(337\) Hope Explored Trailer - YouTube](#) If you are interested, please contact Dave, Mike, Philip or Evelyn

## TIMES TO PRAY...

Wednesdays at 7pm-7:30pm Quiet Evening Prayer: All welcome

Next St Nicholas Benefice Prayer Gathering at St Nicholas: tonight (25<sup>th</sup> May) at 7:45-9pm

Next Early Morning Prayer Zoom. 7am-8am Tuesday 31<sup>st</sup> May. Contact Dave for a link

*The church will also be open for visitors and private prayer on Tuesdays from 2-4pm, Wednesdays from 12noon-2pm and Thursdays from 10am-12 noon*

**ST NICHOLAS CHURCH WALKING GROUP** - the next walk will be on Thursday 9th June from The Crown at Aston End. Starting at 10.15 am taking in the Beane Valley down to Aston and back via a different route. Around 5 miles. Contact Karen Cattell if walking and if you want to stop lunch.

**URGENT NEED FOR THE UKRAINE.** The Barnabas Fund has issued an urgent plea for more **TINNED FOOD** (that can be opened without a can opener), especially sardines and canned meat, packet cup-a-soup and energy bars; – please do bring them along to church. You can also make financial donations via the touch and give point at St Nicholas, through the Barnabas Fund's website at [Barnabas Fund: Hope and Aid for the Persecuted Church](#) or by placing your gift in an envelope marked Barnabas Fund Ukraine and placing it in the offering.

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

29<sup>th</sup> May: Psalm 32: 1-11

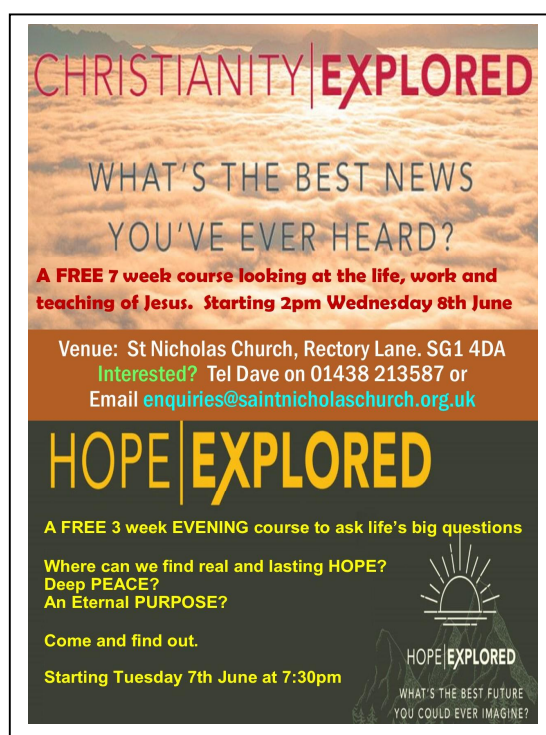
5<sup>th</sup> June: Psalm 72: 1-20

12<sup>th</sup> June: Psalm 96:1-13

## PRAYER LETTER FROM BENSON AND MIYA: The latest newsletter from Benson and Miya can be found here:

[https://us18.campaign-archive.com/?e=test\\_email&u=7b40595950e72426539bf736f&id=552824bdf4](https://us18.campaign-archive.com/?e=test_email&u=7b40595950e72426539bf736f&id=552824bdf4)

**NEW SONGS:** A few weeks ago, a number of us went to the Bible by the Beach convention in Eastbourne. The sung worship was led by the All Souls Orchestra who introduced a number of lovely new songs. I'll give a link to a new one each week for the next few weeks. Here's the first one all about the Lord's **Loving Kindness**. [\(1\) Lovingkindness \[Official Lyric Video\] - Matt Redman, Matt Boswell, Matt Papa, Keith & Kristyn Getty - YouTube](#)



**OTHER DATES FOR YOUR DIARY:**

**MEN'S BREAKFAST** on Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> June at 8.30am at the Standing Order, followed by a working party in the Vicarage Garden from 10am.

**FLOWER FESTIVAL at St Nicholas Church: Fri 17<sup>th</sup> June (11am-4pm), Sat 18<sup>th</sup> (1-4pm), and Sun 19<sup>th</sup> (1-4pm)**

The flower team is now in the final weeks of preparation to bring the St Nicholas Flower Festival together. Can you spare some time over the three days the church is open to the public? There will be sign-up sheets in the church on a small table in the parish room from this Thursday and they would be grateful for any help in the following areas:

Cake baking / Serving refreshments during the open times / Welcoming the public / Opening on the Saturday

They will also need help after the service on Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> June to move pews and chairs. Thank you in advance for any support you can offer.

**LOOSE CHANGE COLLECTION:** The 'penny pot' for loose change to raise money for the flower festival will be in church at St Nicholas this Sunday.