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Briefing 118: Wednesday 8th June, 2022.

Dear friends,

I guess we've all been on the look-out for one of these at some point in our lives. That one thing that will solve a particular problem, or save us from a whole lot of hard work. That pill that would make you lose weight and keep it off. That one exercise that would give you the physique of an Olympian. That one short book that would tell you everything you needed to know for the exam.

Perhaps we long for something like that in our Christian lives as well. An easy way to know the Bible inside out. A sure-fire way to develop a brilliant prayer life. A straightforward method of breaking bad habits and growing a godly character. A simple way to grow in the boldness and ability to share our faith with confidence and clarity.

Sadly, there is no easy way in any of these things, not for losing weight, getting fit, passing exams nor for growth in the Christian life. Growing in knowledge of God's Word takes time and effort, reading and listening. Developing a better prayer life takes devotion over weeks and months and years, regularly making the time to spend with God. Likewise growing more like Jesus and in boldness in our witness takes time and effort. There is no easy way. Hence Jesus said that following him was akin to carrying our cross. It will involve sacrifice, reordering our priorities, putting sins and bad habits to death (and doing it again and again!), taking one step and then another, and then another as we follow where Jesus leads us.

Wonderfully, we don't have to do that on our own. Jesus himself comes and lives in all believers by his Holy Spirit. The Spirit enlightens our minds to the meaning of the scriptures, draws us closer to God in fellowship and prayer, convicts us of our sin and assures us of God's forgiveness, helps us to overcome and change our bad habits, and gives us joy and boldness that we can't help but talk about Jesus. The Holy Spirit is our teacher, our encourager, comforter, assurance, trainer, advocate and a deposit guaranteeing the eternal inheritance that is ours through faith in Jesus. He is with us always, from the moment we turn to Jesus in repentance and faith, until we see Jesus face to face in glory, so we do not walk the Christian life alone.

But the gift of the Holy Spirit is not an excuse to 'lay back and let God.' The Spirit is our helper, not our slave. He teaches us, but won't sit the exam for us. He trains us, and will re-shape our character into the likeness of Jesus, but we have to do the work and exercise. So having been born again by the Spirit, we are to be continually filled with the Spirit, to keep in step with the Spirit, listen to the Spirit, obey the prompting of the Spirit, live in accordance with the Spirit, put to death the misdeeds of the body by the Spirit, eagerly desire the greater gifts of the Spirit, grow in the fruits of the Spirit, keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace, sing in the Spirit, pray in the Spirit, love one another in the Spirit, stand firm in the Spirit, be bold in the Spirit, share the gospel by the Spirit and make sure we do nothing to quench the Spirit.

The Christian life is a life lived by faith in Jesus, to the glory of God the Father, in the power of the Holy Spirit, and to enjoy the joy, peace and fellowship of the Holy Spirit we must keep in step with him. How do we do that? By reading the scriptures the Spirit inspired to be written. By gathering regularly with God's people, the church the Spirit brought into being. And by obeying the promptings of the Spirit as He brings to mind those things He has taught us already. Is it always easy? No. In fact, it's often hard. Is it simple to grasp? Yes.

It was such Spirit-empowered prayer, service, worship and witnessing that characterised the early church and led to its amazing growth. May the LORD stir us up to do likewise that God's Church may grow today also!

Grace and peace,

Dave

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

Christianity Explored: There's still time to join the Christianity Explored course which starts this afternoon at 2pm. Contact Mike Wilton... or turn up at the church at 2pm.

[\(337\) Christianity Explored Official Guest Trailer - YouTube](#)

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.

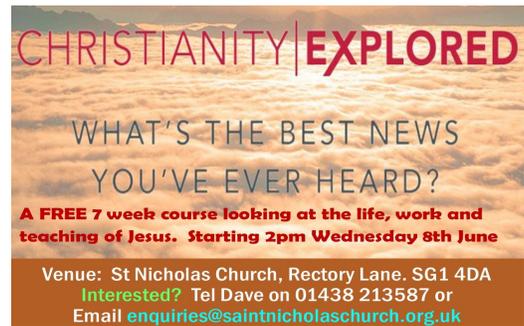
READINGS FOR THE NEXT FEW WEEKS: The readings for the next 3 weeks are as follows:

12th June: Psalm 96:1-13

19th June: Hebrews 1: 1-14

26th June: Hebrews 2: 1-18

NEW SONGS: Here's the third of the new songs some of us sang at the Bible by the Beach convention in Eastbourne. We'll be singing this on Sunday at St Nicholas – although perhaps not at this volume! [\(1\) Your Love - YouTube](#)



ST NICHOLAS STEVENAGE WELCOME YOU TO OUR 2022

FLOWER FESTIVAL ON A THEME OF BIBLE STORIES

OVER 20 FLOWER DISPLAYS FROM INDIVIDUALS, CLUBS, SOCIETIES, SCHOOLS + BUSINESSES.



**Friday + Saturday 17th-18th June from 11am-4pm
Sunday 19th June from 1pm-4pm**

Entrance by donation. Refreshments available.

St Nicholas Church, Rectory Lane, Stevenage. SG1 4DA
www.saintnicholaschurch.org.uk

OTHER IMPORTANT DATES FOR YOUR DIARY:

MEN'S BREAKFAST 8:30am on Saturday 11th June at the Standing Order, followed by a working party in the Vicarage Garden from 10am. There's some weeding and cutting back to do... but lots of fences and decking to paint... so don't wear anything precious! Cakes and coffee provided!

FLOWER FESTIVAL at St Nicholas Church:
17th – 19th June (see poster)

Lots of help needed to welcome guests and to make and serve refreshments. Contact Christine Chambers to offer your help and support!

CHURCH FAMILY BBQ
at the Vicarage for all in **BOTH CHURCHES** –
Saturday 16th July:
from 4:30pm to 8pm.
Save the date and come along!



3 WONDERFUL OPPORTUNITIES TO SERVE

Church-Sitters – St Nicholas Church. We need more volunteers to work in pairs to open the church and welcome visitors during the week either Tuesday 2-4pm, Wednesday 12noon-2pm.

Sunday Welcomers – Both Churches- can you smile and chat easily? Then join our welcome teams and be the first face people see as they come into church.

DBS Administrator – to cover both Churches. In keeping with our Safeguarding Policies, all those working with children, young people or vulnerable adults, or involved in some other designated roles, need 3-yearly DBS checks to be complete before they can begin. We now need someone with good admin skills and distraction to urgently to take over this key admin role in helping to process the DBS forms. It will involve some basic computer skills, checking ID and chasing up references where required. Could you do this? Support and training offered. Speak to Dave or Martin Bailey asap.