



Readings for this week:

Monday	Reading 2 Thess 1:1–2:12 Pray for Bill & Sue Ellis
Tuesday	Reading 2 Thess 2:13–3:18 Pray for Phil Evans and family
Wednesday	Reading 1 Tim 1 Pray for Peter Evans & family
Thursday	Reading 1 Tim 2:1–3:7 Pray for Jon (Drew & Stephanie, Alex & Mark) Fisher
Friday	Reading 1 Tim 3:8–4:16 Pray for Jamie, Maida, Jimson & Jewell Filoteo
Saturday	Reading: Catch up Pray for Sylvia Findlay & family
Sunday	Reading 1 Tim 5:1–6:2 Pray for Karina Philips and family

Prayer requests:

- ▶ We pray for Christine H who is still in hospital and quite poorly; and for Bill E who was taken back into hospital last week and is on oxygen; for Jon F as he continues to recover following radiotherapy, but feeling fatigued; for John B who continues to receive Herceptin infusions but asks for prayer that side effects might ease
- ▶ We were sorry to hear that Lesley Achim's dad, David, passed away; pray for Lesley, Daniel and family
- ▶ Pray for Sheila S who is now seeking employment following redundancy
- ▶ Also pray for local businesses affected by the Tier 3 restrictions

Welcome to our morning service - and we hope you remembered to put your clocks back one hour last night. If you didn't, then this will explain why there was no church service at the usual time!

We congratulate Huw Jones on receiving *three* awards at the virtual NTC Graduation ceremony last weekend - still available to see via NTC website at nazarene.ac.uk. Two of Huw's awards were for 'a student whose goal was full-time pastoral ministry' (one from the **Board of General Superintendents**), and his other award was the **British Isles South District NYI Award** for 'a student actively involved in work with young people'. Huw has also been elected to be Student Body Treasurer. We continue to pray for him. The awards and prizes presented come from many different sources, and for the first time our own church has awarded a prize – the **Manchester Brooklands Church Prize for excellence in Social Theology** – which went to Bethany Bird who graduated with a BA (Hons) degree in Theology, and is now living in Bristol.

From this Wednesday we will no longer be holding *the Church at Prayer* in our sanctuary; we will be holding a **Zoom Prayer Meeting**. If you have a computer or smartphone, you can join the link to the meeting from 10.30 am each Wednesday until further notice. The link can be found on the email version of this *Update*. We will, however, with our technical team, continue to stream our live Sunday services from the sanctuary on a weekly basis, unless government regulations change.

We are delighted to offer a **belated Happy 80th Birthday** to Peter Evans and pray for God's richest blessings upon him and his family. Happy birthday to Will Graham too.

We hope to have the result of the members' **ballot** this weekend. The protocol is to inform the church board who will then pass on the result to Rev Michael Kane. According to our constitution he has up to two weeks to respond to a positive ballot. We will inform everyone at the earliest possible opportunity. We are so grateful for all your prayers and trust the Lord for a good and blessed long-term outcome.

Lucy Frost, our Church Support Worker, will be preaching on Sunday 1st November. Sunday the 8th will be **Remembrance Sunday** and we will do our best to retain our observance of this important day in our calendar. Then on Sunday 15th November Huw Jones, our 'college placement student', will be preaching his first message in our church. Please continue to pray for Huw as he works hard to prepare for that occasion. We cannot thank you enough for your prayers and support in these days of challenge. Blessings to one and all... **Grace & Peace!**

Web: www.BrooklandsChurch.uk Email: info@BrooklandsChurch.uk



Message: *The Three Loves*. **Readings:** Psalm 8; Matthew 22: 34-40

For the past two weeks, we have looked at **The Three Ways** (to be patient); then we considered **The Three Words** (Good, Love, and Hope). This morning - **The Three Loves**!

Rather than look at four distinctive meanings of the English word 'Love', such as **Philia** (love of a friend), **Eros** (romantic love), **Storge** (empathy fondness) and, of course, **Agape** (unconditional godly love), I want to take a slightly different approach.

(However, if you are interested in looking deeper at these Greek words for love, then you need the classic book by C.S. Lewis entitled simply, **The Four Loves**). For the first two loves, we can't do better than consider our Lord's understanding of the entire Law & the Prophets. We did touch on this last week. The first and foremost love is to...

1. Love God

We are to love God **whom we cannot see**. This greatest of all loves is matched only by the need to express love for the One we cannot see by faith.

Indeed, we use the word '**relationship**' to speak of our love for God; the very word used to express our love for people we can see and touch. We might prefer to use the greatest Greek word to describe our potential love for God - **Agape**! The very love with which God Almighty unfailingly loves you and me! I do not want to skip over this important point, because for many it is a real hurdle. How can I love someone I have not seen? We are not just talking about being *informed about God* but experiencing God.

How do people experience God?

When we look around at the wonder of creation, people can often be submerged in a 'God-moment'. When we pay a visit to an awe-inspiring Cathedral or Abbey and we look up, we can often sense the presence of God. And when we celebrate communion, we take a symbol of His physical body; we also take a symbol of his life-giving blood.

Augustine used the analogy of *a sponge being placed in the ocean*. When you do that, the sponge becomes heavy with water. In a real way, both the ocean and the sponge become one. They are *still* separate entities, yet the ocean has completely penetrated the sponge. We can experience Christ through the Eucharist, through Baptism, through Prayer, through worshipping together, through Fellowship with other believers and of course, through listening to his Word. Paul writes:

"Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ." (Romans 10:17)

In fact, the latter (the saving word of Christ) can be deeply moving. When people respond to the preaching of the Gospel, they often are utterly transformed. They get involved in life-changing vocations which requires years of preparation and is followed by years of service.

This is a relationship based upon **Loving God**! It goes much further than 'informing' - it is infilling, and transformative. It is an encounter with The Holy! The record of Isaiah's encounter with the Lord Almighty is one such example.

"In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord seated on a throne, high and exalted, and the train of his robe filled the temple. The seraphs... were calling to one another: "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory." (Isaiah 6:1-3)

Our Love for God is a very special love; and that love is, by its very nature, extended to...

2. Love One another

If we are to love God whom we cannot see, then we are to love those **whom we can't ignore**! Let me explain what I mean by that.

It is sometimes easier to love a loving, gracious, forgiving and kind God whom we cannot see rather than love someone we can see but does not like us, discriminates against us and might even treat us with contempt. Remember the story of the Good Samaritan who loved his neighbouring Jew; the point being **that it probably would not have happened the other way around**!

We have so **often pre-judged according to appearance**. Certain people look dodgy to us! Yet the '**love**' we are to aspire to for them is the highest kind - '**Agape**'. I thought it might be '**Philia**' (Love of a friend), but no! I thought our **love** for **others** might be less than our love for our spouse and children - yet to my surprise, I found that it is the godly kind of love for them too.

Do you remember what Jesus said in John's gospel: **"Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends."** (John 15:12-13) The context of this was where Jesus said to his disciples, '**I have called you Friends**'; Jesus then says, '**love each other**'. I believe Jesus placed this in second place to the Love highlighted in the First Commandment.

'I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. "You shall have no other gods before me." (Exodus 20:2-3)

To answer the question, which is the greatest commandment? Jesus replied saying, '**You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. And the second is like it: You shall love your neighbour as yourself.'** (Matt 22: 37-39)



So then, the first love is *loving God whom we cannot see*; the second is *loving people whom we see around us*. And the Third Love is to...

3. Love the Work of His Hands

Each Sunday morning, we often include a Psalm as one of our readings. The Psalms are poetic songs about worshipping God and expressing our thanks for His wonderful and amazing creation around us.

“O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is *your name in all the earth!* You have set your glory above the heavens... When I look at your heavens, *the work of your hands*, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care for him?” (Psalm 8:1–4)

In addressing *The Three Loves*, and leaving this one to the end, *I am not saying it is more important than loving God, or loving our neighbour*. But here is the truth - the environment in which we live daily is, ‘*The Work of his hands*’. This *Blue Planet* is, along with us, part of *His* Creation!

I recently watched a documentary by Sir David Attenborough entitled, *A Life on our Planet*. If you have not seen it yet, **make it a priority to watch!** It is on iPlayer/ Netflix.

Is the **Theology** of the Bible concerned with **Ecology**? I think so according to many of the Psalms. Is God going to give us a Resurrection body? Yes, He is. Is God going to make ‘*a new Heaven and a new Earth*’ – for sure! And if Ecology and being good stewards of all God’s gifts is **Global**, then the economy, the right to work and provide for our families is **Local**.

And when we talk about the Love of God, we had better talk about the practicalities too. What do we say together in the Lord’s Prayer – ‘**And give us this day our daily bread...**’ This is both a local and a global need *which has always existed*. We must not stay quiet while politicians and Corporates exploit our God-given natural resources.

I am talking about God’s **Creation**, God’s **Provision** for all the **7.8 Billion** (and counting), and about the importance of our **Stewardship** today!

If our love for God’s Creation is not used in a selfish way (such as exploiting our natural resources) but seen as God’s Provision to us, *our great-grandchildren*, and generations beyond, **and we treat it as such** - we can make God smile...!

I believe in the ‘**Work of His Hands**’, do **you**? Wherever we see it – in your heart just now; your home; your country; and our world. They each and all demand our love through Christian Stewardship! **Amen**.