

Pandemic Times

Friends

"If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land." – 2 Chronicles 7:14

I'm sure these famous words are familiar to you. If not, take a moment to drink them in. They are the words of God to a people in exile, far from home and far from Him. They are words of grace to an undeserving people. They offer hope; a way back; restoration.

And they remain those same things to us today. God is, after all, unchanging. Now there's a reassuring truth in this past year of uncertainty. God remains the same yesterday, today and forever! And what was true for the Old Testament people of God is true for us today: no matter where we are, what we are going through or what we have done, we are invited by a loving God to return to him in prayer – and prayer makes a difference!

Why am I saying this? At the midweek prayer meeting last week, I promised I would mention the importance of that gathering at church on Sunday. And I forgot to do so last week, didn't I. So I'm making up for it by talking about it here.

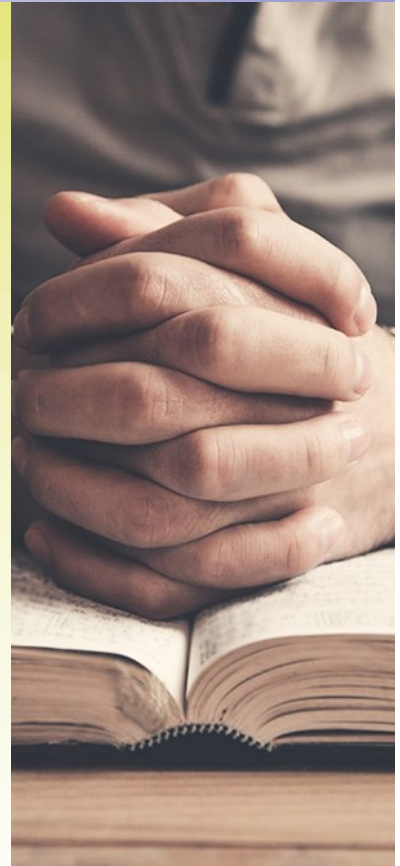
A small group of us gather, as has been happening for the last year, on Wednesdays at 10:30am on Zoom to pray as a Church. If you're available, you would be so welcome to join us. You'll find the Zoom link further below on this Update.

I believe that prayer is the lifeblood of the church. That's why we saturate our worship gatherings in it, and that's why we make it a priority in our weekly programme. Of course, I know that not everyone is available on Wednesday mornings but please don't hesitate to let us know how we can pray for you and your family.

And finally, don't neglect personal prayer. Prayer is the primary means through which we live out our relationship with God. If you would ever like to chat more about prayer, let me know, as it's one of my favourite subjects. So much so that our College gives me the great privilege of teaching on the subject.

Wherever you are and whatever you find yourself doing today, know that as we gather for worship, you are welcome, and you are prayed for!

Mick



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August 18th – 22nd 2021 @ Ellesmere School, Shropshire

The Nazarene Church is arranging a short all-age holiday this summer, at Ellesmere School in Shropshire. If you would like more information about the holiday, click this link to the

[BISD Facebook Page](#).

Daily Reading and Prayer Guide

Special items for prayer this week.

- For David Walker, and Jean, following the funeral of Marie, David's mother, this week. David and Jean have expressed their appreciation of all the prayers and support they have received from the church these last few weeks.
- For those who continue to need God's physical healing in their life: Isobel, Jon F, John B, Claire, Bill, Mick (Pastor Mick's dad).
- For all the children connected to the church.
- For the church leadership as they seek to move the church forward through and out from the pandemic.
- For the global effects of the Coronavirus pandemic – particularly in India. May national leaders work together for a global solution for all of humanity.

Date	Reading	Pray for
Monday 3rd May	Luke 20:9–26	Gert Schwartz and family
Tuesday 4th May	Luke 20:27–21:4	Marion Tewkesbury and family
Wednesday 5th May	Luke 21:5–38	John Torkington and Family
Thursday 6th May	Luke 22:1–23	Julie, Hayley and family
Friday 7th May	Luke 22:24–46	Jean and Dave Walker and family
Saturday 8th May	Catch up	Carol Wray and family
Sunday 9th May	Luke 22:47–71	Norma Whyte and family



Encounters with the Resurrected Jesus (3)

John 21 verses 1 to 17

Jesus Appears to seven disciples

Our speaker this Sunday is Pastor Mick.

Sermon Notes for 2 May 2021

If we haven't met in person yet, and the only times that you have 'seen' me is through this camera, then here is something you may not know about me: I'm going bald. Now don't worry, I'm at peace with it. I know I'm down to my last few haircuts and sometime in the not too distant future I'll bid a final farewell to a friend that has spent around 35 years of my life with me. And the reason that you might not know it is because it looks okay at the front, but it's not until you see what's going on at the back you begin to then realise the extent of the issue.

I can go for days forgetting about it. I'll even catch myself in the mirror and think, "my hair looks pretty good today!" But then there are the times when I catch a mirror at just the right angle. Or do you know what's the worst? When I go for a haircut and I see myself in the front facing mirror looking all fresh and then the barber brings out the second mirror to show me the back!

Sometimes when we read Scripture, it acts like a mirror, do you know that? Now Scripture's main purpose is to point us to God, and it does that and it will do that this morning in just a moment. But before we get there I want to point something out from today's reading because when I read it this week it was like someone holding up a mirror that pointed deep into my soul.

In our passage, following the resurrection of Jesus the disciples, led by Peter, find themselves fishing. It seems that in this time of uncertainty – remember the disciples are still wrestling with all the implications of the resurrection – amidst all the change, amidst all the trauma, the disciples have gone back to what they knew. In fact, you could say that they went back to the thing that Jesus called them from right at the beginning of the story. That was my mirror moment! Because we do the same, don't we? **In times of uncertainty, in times of change, in times of difficulty, we find ourselves longing for something that we know to be certain, true, familiar, comfortable.** And if Jesus has taught us anything, particularly this past year, there is nothing on earth that is certain. **The only certainty we can know is the certainty of the love of an unchanging God.**

And so the disciples are fishing and all night they have caught nothing. And Jesus calls out to them on the shore, but they don't know it's him. "Throw your net on the right side of the boat and you will find some." And by following this very basic change in their approach they haul a catch that's so heavy that they can't

Encounters with the Resurrected Jesus (3)

John 21 verses 1 to 17
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Sermon notes continued...

even bring it in. They need to tow it back to shore. Now here's what this tells us: **The only certainty of success in this life, the only guarantee of fulfilment, comes not from what we do or how good we are at what we do, but from our willingness to hear Jesus' voice and obey it.**

But perhaps the greatest thing about this whole chapter is that fact that it exists at all. John's Gospel, if you read it, 'finishes' at the end of chapter 20. Jesus has died for the sins of the world, rose victorious over death, he's appeared to his disciples and sent them into the world with his message of peace, and the whole thing even has a nice little concluding statement: "these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name." It's done! But there's one problem: Peter. Peter, you'll remember from our Easter service is the mistake maker of the group. **But his greatest mistake was made on the night Jesus was arrested when he denied him three times.** And Jesus predicted this would happen, but when he did Peter was furious! "Not me, Jesus, any of the others but not me, even if I need to die for you, I will." But, as Jesus predicted, whilst warming himself by a fire, Peter is asked three times if he is a follower of Jesus and three times Peter replies, "No, I don't know the man."

So why does John 21 exist then if it's finished in chapter 20? Well it's because **the work of the Gospel is not finished as long as one remains outside, yet to be welcomed back in.**

So what does Jesus do? He lights a fire to cook breakfast, and it's while they are around that fire, a fire not too different from the one that Peter denied him around, he asks Peter this question: "Do you love me?" And he asks it not once, not twice, but three times – one for every denial. And three times Peter replies: "I love you; I love you; I love you."

You see here is what Jesus does for us. Here is what his resurrection means in our life. **Jesus, because of who he is, and because of what he has done, can take every failure and mistake that we have ever made and give us a second chance.** And he does so by asking us a simple question: "Do you love me?"

The 2021 Drysdale Lecture

Monday 10th May 2021, 7:30 pm to 9:00 pm.

The Nazarene Theological College is hosting a Zoom forum of missionaries past, present and future, to contribute to a discussion on *'The changing models of missionary work: a missional conversation in the light of the 100th year Anniversary of Emmanuel Bible College'*. The meeting will be hosted by Julie Lunn and Peter Rae, and the panel will include Davide and Tanya Cantarella, Sandro Laifi, David McCulloch, Cosmas Mutowa and Mi Ja Wi.



[Click to register for this event.](#)

Brooklands News

- ⇒ On Sunday, Pastor Mick will be bringing God's word to us. We have a new song from our church band, and a special video for the children.
- ⇒ We will also be celebrating communion together on Sunday. Make sure you get your own communion elements ready beforehand.
- ⇒ We have Zoom fellowship after church on Sunday, and we have our weekly prayer meeting on Wednesday at 10:30am. Click and join us if you are able. [**JOIN ZOOM MEETING**](#)
- ⇒ On Thursday this week our church is being used by Manchester City Council for this year's local elections.

Sunday church attendance—important notice

In line with [Government guidelines](#), we have a limited number of spaces for people to attend church on Sundays. We are taking precautions to make sure everyone who attends is kept Covid-safe. These include:

- ◆ Church stewards will wipe down hard surfaces before each meeting.
- ◆ The church sanctuary will have adequate ventilation.
- ◆ Attenders must wear a face covering at all times, except for when they are speaking from the pulpit.
- ◆ Attenders must sanitise their hands upon entry.
- ◆ Attenders should refrain from singing aloud.
- ◆ Attenders must not mingle with anyone outside of their household or support bubble.

If possible, attenders should also test themselves for Covid before attending church. Self-testing kits can be obtained free from your local pharmacy. **Please DO NOT attend church if you have any symptoms of Covid-19.**

Contact Mick Kane or Mark Bolton to register to attend church on Sunday.

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At Brooklands, we are big enough to be part of a world-wide denomination, yet small enough to invite you to make our church your home. Please visit our website and contact us if you would like to get in touch or need more information on any of our events.

During the Coronavirus pandemic, we are holding weekly services on our YouTube channel, starting at 10:30 am each Sunday.

We look forward to welcoming you to our fellowship!

