

Weekly Prayers, News and Thoughts

Welcome to our condensed Newsletter. We are publishing this in digital format to help keep us up to date with each other.

Lockdown and social distancing are now undergoing changes and we are monitoring the situation. We are currently considering ways to meet up again physically and to re-open our building and become involved in the community again safely as soon as circumstances allow.

If you know of anyone who you feel would benefit from our online offerings please feel free to share our website at www.bishopbaptists.co.uk with others so they too can enjoy our weekly online service (also available on our YouTube Channel), newsletters, blog and other items of prayer and interest.

Pray for those who mourn and have lost loved ones to Corona Virus, for those who have the illness, for those caring and supporting those who are ill, for those exploring the possibilities of vaccines and for the effectiveness of national strategies and personal practices in overcoming the pandemic.

For help and support. please feel free to contact:

- John Claydon johnclaydon@thenba.org.uk
- Paul Revill paulrevill@thenba.org.uk or
- Elaine Webster elainewebster@thenba.org.uk

Prayers

Please continue to pray, either by yourself, or collectively, using one of the many online and social media channels for:

- ***Members & friends of our Fellowship***
- ***People, families & neighbours within your own circle experiencing difficulties***
- ***Those who work for our benefit and welfare in frontline jobs, putting themselves and their families in vulnerable and frequently life-threatening situations***
- ***Supermarket staff and other supply industries***
- ***Carers in Care Homes and Nursing Homes and Sheltered Housing and Hostels***
- ***Carers who look after members of their own families***
- ***Postal Workers and other delivery people who bring us our mail, food, and medicines***
- ***All those in positions of leadership, research, development, industrial organisations, and new productions, at this traumatic time***

This week We are asked by NBA to pray for our Baptist Hospital Chaplains at this time of great challenge and for our NHS as they support staff and patients who also carry anxieties of their own:

- ***Rev Robert Muir - Wansbeck Hospital, Ashington***
- ***Rev Jim Wright - Lead chaplain at North Tees Hospital, Stockton***
- ***Rev Rodney Breckon - James Cook Hospital***
- ***Rev Graeme Harrison - Lead chaplain, Northumbria Healthcare Trust***
- ***Rev Liz Edwards - North Tyneside hospital***
- ***Rev Dave Etherington - North Durham University Hospital + BAGH***

Please pray especially for all those living and working in:

- ***Walmer Grove***
- ***Byron Avenue***
- ***B.A. Fellowship of Churches***
- ***Escomb Road***
- ***Conway Grove***
- ***Sandringham Care Home***

Pray for those who mourn and have lost loved ones to Covid-19, for those who have the illness, for those caring and supporting those who are ill, for those exploring the possibilities of vaccines and for the effectiveness of national strategies and personal practices in overcoming the pandemic. We must not forget those people who have recently lost loved ones too, from other causes and who are going through the grief and stresses which are made even harder to bear by the present circumstances.

Northern Baptist Association – Devotional for Norton Baptist Church

Last week we considered how as believers we should always be prepared to give a reasoned explanation for our beliefs. Whilst this is vital, it is not in itself enough to impact upon the lives of those we hope to reach with the gospel.

We are now in the age of where truth is no longer seen as an absolute. As a result, people are now not so much interested in what is true, but what our truth can do for us.

This concept is central to biblical teaching.

The book of Isaiah begins with a plea for rational thought, 'Come, let us reason together', before considering its outworking, 'though your sins are scarlet, they shall be white as snow.'

J.B. Phillips translates the term 'epistle' as 'living letter'.

We are God's living letters to the communities we serve. When we ensure that our rational belief impacts upon our daily life, those around us cannot help but be challenged.

How does our understanding of the gospel impact upon our daily life?

Let's make sure we 'walk the talk'!

We give thanks for:

- Our pastor Martin and his wife's recent R & R.
- The new outreach opportunity we have, to engage with the local community through distribution of food parcels.
- The success of our pastoral support team.

We pray for:

- For the provision of a regular place of worship.
- For wisdom as social lockdown regulations are eased and we seek a return to corporate worship.
- That we will be able to successfully engage with those members who are unable to return to corporate worship yet.

(Prayers and devotional supplied by Roger M Daniel: NBA Co-ordinator)

Online Prayer

- Bishop Auckland Baptist Church Service
<https://www.bishopbaptists.co.uk/babc-sunday-service/>
- Northern Baptist Association Service
<https://www.bishopbaptists.co.uk/nba-sunday-service/>
- Influence Church Service (Services streamed Sundays at 11.00am and 5.00pm)
<http://www.influencechurch.co.uk>

FareShare Food Scheme

John and Vanessa at Bishop Auckland Methodist Church continue their sterling efforts in collecting the vast amount of FareShare food kindly donated by local suppliers. They are currently taking the food to Woodhouse Close Food Bank to ensure the most efficient route of distribution. The food bank is open every weekday from 10.00am until 12.00pm.

We are now investigating the possibility of additional donations from other branches of the scheme to assist in keeping the food banks resourced so they can continue to help those need.

Church Garden

The good friends of Bishop Auckland Baptist Church continue their good ministering to the garden and it really does show in the series of photographs in our [gardening blog](#) on the website.

More people continue to pass the church and some have stopped to chat with a little more confidence than previously seen. The easing of Covid-19 restrictions along with clear guidance is slowly bringing people together in the fresh air once again.

Thoughts

BABC Zooming in - Last week some of us were able to virtually “attend” our Zoom Meeting.

We chewed the fat and chatted and discussed our progress with regards to getting back to having more “actual” meetings.

(I did, at first, use the word “physical” but the thesaurus wasn’t on the same wavelength as me! Beware the internet!)

We also included a time of Communion - Breaking Bread together. Why? What does the bible say about it?

In John’s Gospel we are told about Jesus feeding 5,000 men (+ women and children) with a couple of little fish and 5 small loaves.

When meeting up later with the disciples, Jesus explained to them the importance of what they had witnessed :

John 6 vs 25 – 35 and vs 47 – 51: Jesus the Bread of Life

²⁵When they found him on the other side of the lake, they asked him, “Rabbi, when did you get here?”

²⁶Jesus answered: “Very truly I tell you, you are looking for me, not because you saw the signs I performed but because you ate the loaves and had your fill.

²⁷Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. For on him God the Father has placed his seal of approval.”

²⁸Then they asked him: “What must we do to do the works God requires?”

²⁹Jesus answered: “The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent.”

³⁰So they asked him: “What sign then will you give that we may see it and believe you? What will you do? ³¹Our ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written: ‘He gave them bread from heaven to eat’.

³²Jesus said to them: “Very truly I tell you, it is not Moses who has given you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. ³³For the bread of God is the bread that comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.”

³⁴“Sir,” they said, “always give us this bread.”

³⁵Then Jesus declared, “I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty... ⁴⁷Very truly I tell you, the one who believes has eternal life. ⁴⁸I am the bread of life. ⁴⁹Your ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness,

yet they died. ⁵⁰But here is the bread that comes down from heaven, which anyone may eat and not die.

⁵¹"I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats this bread will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world."

And then, later at "The Last Supper", just before the agony and torture of His crucifixion on the cross and His earthly death, Jesus again explained to the disciples the symbol of common bread which he broke into pieces during the meal.

The bread represented His own Body and "broken bread" was what he would very soon become through the pain and agony of his subsequent mortal death.

and also in Mathew 26 V 26 NIV:

²⁶While they were eating, Jesus took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying:

***"Take and eat; this is my body.....
I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry"***

Bible Study

Lost in Logic - When we face a trial or an adverse situation in life, we often try to figure it out, fix it, or logically argue our way through it.

When has God done anything in your life that seemed illogical at the time but turned out to be something great?

If this hasn't happened to you, when have you seen this happen to someone else?

What do you notice about the various paths by which God led His people when delivering them throughout the Bible?

What do you notice about God as He delivered His people?

When we rely too much on our logic and reasoning, we leave ourselves vulnerable to the outcome of that reasoning, instead of preparing ourselves for God's intervention.

God is in control.

I don't care how things appear to you right now. How scared you are of Covid? Is it dominating your life? Have you been unable to see friends and family? Perhaps your income has been affected, or you worry you may lose your job. You, or family member(s) may have had it. You may have lost family or friends to it.

Often people think that they are in ultimate control. It may look as though they are. BUT, we know that all is in His Hands.

During the exodus, Pharaoh had every appearance of control over the Israelites, as his army chased them across the wilderness and backed them up against an enormous body of water.

(see Ex. 14:5-31).

But what we see is never all there is to be seen. Sovereignty can reshape water and set souls free. God can make a way where there seems to be no way at all. God is in control.

In what ways can human logic get in the way, of identifying and following God's direction?

What might we miss if God worked only in ways that made sense to us?

Consider the example Paul gave the Corinthians:

Since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not come to know God. God was well-pleased through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe. For indeed Jews ask for signs and Greeks search for wisdom; but we preach Christ crucified, to Jews a stumbling block and to Gentiles foolishness, but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men. (1 Corinthians 1:21-25)

Why would Jesus' crucifixion seem like foolishness from a human perspective?

How did Paul address the argument that the cross was foolish?

We look back at the cross with the benefit of time, but for the first-century audience, the cross didn't make sense.

For the Jews, being crucified meant being cursed and forsaken by God. To them, Jesus' death was a sign that He wasn't who He claimed to be.

To the Greeks, crucifixion was a mark of shame. It would have been unbelievable to them. Worshiping a crucified criminal would have been nonsense.

However, the cross is foolish only from a human perspective. Despite its folly the cross demonstrated the wisdom and power of God.

As Peter pointed out, Jesus was “delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God” (Acts 2:23).

In other words, what might seem illogical to the world was the perfect plan of God. The Father allowed human evil against His Son to fulfil His purpose.

God has a myriad of reasons for what He does and for what He allows: “My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways,” declares the LORD. “For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways And My thoughts than your thoughts.” (ISAIAH 55:8-9)

God’s vantage point is so far above our own, that when we seek to use our logic, it’s like trying to put together a puzzle with only a fraction of the pieces. Logically figuring out God’s ways will never happen, simply because we don’t have all the information.

Sometimes God delays us on our pathway because He’s seeking to develop our character or our passion for something He wants us to do. Sometimes He delays because He’s seeking to develop a quality within someone else with whom we’ll come in contact later. Or at times He’s ordering events so that their timing intersects with the plan He wants to carry out.

Always keep in mind that He’s the great, all knowing God. He doesn’t always disclose His purposes until we’re much further along the path.

Read the following verses.

We also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance; and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope; and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts, through the Holy Spirit who was given to us. (Romans 5:3-5)

The testing of your faith produces endurance. (JAMES 1:3)

What are some reasons God allows difficulties, challenges, and roadblocks along the pathways of our lives? Whenever God sovereignly allows something that’s unpleasant, always remember that it’s also not random. He allowed it for a reason. God always has a reason for what He does and for what He allows.

The Book of Lamentations tells us:

If He causes grief, Then He will have compassion, according to His abundant lovingkindness. (Lamentations 3:32)

Do you find it easy or difficult to trust God when circumstances don’t make sense? If you’re facing a difficult situation or a roadblock, what would it look like to let go of your need to devise an outcome, and surrender to God instead?

Of the Scriptures we've considered, which ones have impacted on you? Which are most helpful to you in confronting the roadblocks you're currently facing?

It's difficult to trust God if you don't believe He's sovereign.

When things happen in your life that are painful or confusing and you don't fully grasp God's sovereignty, it's easy to lose trust in God's control and goodness. But once you grab and hold on to the truth that He's the ruler, controller, sustainer, and authority over all, the seemingly disconnected happenings of life are woven together, into a tapestry of His perfect timing.

The meanderings that seem to take you from place to place, on the pathway of your days now lead somewhere.

Although you may not see the destination or be instantly relieved of the difficulties, your trust in God's providential care and sovereign rule will give you the ability to rest rather than fret, be still rather than be anxious, and praise rather than complain!

I hope this study has helped you realise more about God's sovereign and providential character. These two essential beliefs about God, are the backbone of the Bible. When you understand the sovereignty of God, even though you don't understand what He's doing, you'll learn how to see God in a way you've never seen Him before. You'll find joy in His providence. You'll discover the power of His presence and the purpose of His plans.

PRAYER

Read Romans 8:28-29 and focus on this passage.

Seek to align your mind with God's sovereignty by letting go of your logic and trusting in His divine direction. Ask God to increase your faith so that you can rest more fully in His providential care.

Thanks to John Gaines for this contribution

***“Fear not, for I am with you;
be not dismayed, for I am your God;
I will strengthen you, I will help you,
I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.”***

Isaiah 41:10

Drive-In Church Events



NORTH BONDGATE CAR PARK, Bishop Auckland DL14 7PG
Starts: SUNDAY 26 July for 6 weeks
BOOKING ESSENTIAL for PARKING purposes - check event listing
SUNDAY: 26 July / 2 Aug / 9 Aug / 9 Aug / 16 Aug / 23 Aug / 30



Contact Adrian Hancock on 07557 736386

- BABC Sunday Service <https://www.bishopbaptists.co.uk/babc-sunday-service/>
- BABC Newsletter <https://www.bishopbaptists.co.uk/newsletter/>
- BABC Garden Blog <https://www.bishopbaptists.co.uk/church-garden-blog/>
- NBA Sunday Service <https://www.bishopbaptists.co.uk/nba-sunday-service/>
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