

Weekly Prayers, News and Thoughts

Wednesday Community Days

- Whilst we are constantly aware of the dangers of Covid we are now open both inside and out in the garden. Lunch is available from 11:30am to eat in or take away.
- Volunteers to help are welcome as are gardeners.

Church Services

- We are holding fortnightly services in church and continue to use online services in the intervening weeks.
- Next services are:
5th Sep..... YouTube Service.
12th Sep..... Preacher - John Froud
19th Sep..... YouTube Service.
26th Sep..... Harvest Festival Service followed by Lunch - Preacher: Tony Taylor.
3rd Oct..... YouTube Service.
- In-church services will need a mask - sanitiser will be available and we will be socially distancing.

Bible Study

- Currently on hold until 14th September 2021.

Sharing God's Comfort

- If you know of anyone 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.

Prayers

Please keep in your prayers all local churches and remember those still suffering from the virus plus those whose finances are compromised.

Please continue to pray for:

- All in Bishop Auckland Hospital including Rev David Etherington, Hospital Chaplain.
- Peel Street, Railway Street, Chester Street, Bob Hardisty Drive, Princes Street, Bishop Auckland Market Square, Bishop Auckland Town Hall, Back Bondgate.

Please give thanks for:

- The organisations and people who contribute food, clothing, and books for us to distribute to others including FareShare (via Asda), Feeding Families, The Auckland Project, Local Donations.

NBA Prayers

We are asked to pray this week for: **Headland Baptist Church, Hartlepool**

Thanksgiving

- The way God is using our church for “The Bread and Butter Thing” with the help from St Hilda’s church.
- The wonderful Ecumenical work that is taking place on the Headland.
- Safe return back into our church after Covid.

Prayers

- That we will be a church full of disciples taking time to be still to listen to what God wants us to do personally and together as we move forward.
- For our church to make a noise outside into the community.
- As we start our mid-week groups and various clubs it will be a safe return for all and that we won’t have lost any while we have had to close.

(Mike Cross -NBA Prayer Requests Co-ordinator)

Save The Dates

- Wed 8th SepMacmillan Coffee Morning (10:30am)
- Sat 11th Sep 2021John Froud Concert (7:30:pm)
- Sat 2nd Oct 2021Rev Hayley Young Induction (3:00pm)
- Sun 14th Nov 2021Remembrance Sunday
- Sun 3rd July 2022BABC 150th Anniversary (All Day)

Thoughts

Mercy and Grace

An elegant sunflower stood on its own in the embankment of a lonely stretch of railway, just a few feet away in the waterless rubble and cinders and hard-core.

As we sped past, I wondered how it had grown there with no other sunflowers visible for miles.

Only God could create a plant so hardy it could thrive so close to the track in the uncompromising parched oil covered stones and gravel.

There it was, thriving, waving, in the slipstream, cheerfully greeting travellers as they sped by at 70+ mph.

The Old Testament tells the story of a faithful king of Judah who also showed up unexpectedly. His father and grandfather had enthusiastically served other gods; but after Josiah had been in power for eight years, *“while he was still young, he began to seek the God of his father David”* (2Chronicles 34:3).

He sent workmen to *“repair the temple of the Lord”* (v8), and as they did, they discovered the Book of the Law (the first five books of the Old Testament).

God then inspired Josiah to lead the entire nation of Judah to return to the faith of their ancestors, and they served the Lord *“as long as [Josiah] lived”* (v33).

Our God is the master of unanticipated mercies. He is able to cause great good to spring up unexpectedly out of the unlikely hard rock-strewn and most unlikely, unfavourable, circumstances of life.

Watch Him closely. He may do it again today.

(Based on “Our Daily Bread” devotional, by James Banks)

Kindness

BBC Radio 4 got itself interested in Kindness this last week, mainly because some psychologists at some university decided that “kindness” is a basic human trait, associated with “kin”, but, as society we don’t really know why or how or when etc.

On thinking about it a bit more myself, I decided that we all want to be kind to someone and do something nice and thoughtful for them, either because that’s how God designed us, or we do something good to someone because we may have ulterior motives and are earning “Brownie points”, wanting something in return eventually.

Definitions often associate the word with being friendly, generous, and considerate. While this may be helpful, these three terms can fail to depict the full nature of what kindness looks like.

Author David Wetherall reveals some of the points the Bible makes about kindness rooted in Christ, which gives the term some needed substance:

- ***Kindness is Powerful - For we ourselves were once foolish, disobedient, led astray, slaves to various passions and pleasures, passing our days in malice and envy, hated by others, and hating one another. But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Saviour appeared. (Titus 3:3-4)***

Consider what Paul is claiming here - He is saying that we were fools. We did not obey. We followed leaders who took us astray. Not only this but we spent all our time wishing we had what others had and being angry at them for having it. Other people hated us, and we returned the favour. If I met a person like this today, I would likely say, “They are too far gone! Nothing can bring them back to goodness.”

Then everything shifts as Paul writes, “*But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Saviour appeared.*” Just like that, the previous evils are overshadowed by the great mercy of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Kindness, like meekness, gets confused for passivity and ineffectiveness. But the Bible says otherwise—it is the tool of God’s omnipotence. Kindness is so powerful; it is even stronger than death!

- ***Kindness Can Hurt - Let a righteous man strike me — it is a kindness (Psalm 141:5)***

When I think of actions associated with kindness, I think of “hug,” “listen,” or “smile.” I certainly do not think of the word “strike!” Yet, Psalm 141 unites the two words.

When someone speaks a hard truth into your life, it can hurt. Sometimes it feels like they have betrayed you, like they don’t understand you anymore, or like they are looking down on you. In the moment, you can’t see why they would say what they did—and it just feels like an aimless, unprompted attack.

And yet, what at first seems like an aimless attack may actually be a compassionate gesture, pushing you back toward fixing your eyes on Christ. Once your eyes are on Him, you can look back and say: *“I was in a bad place, and thanks to the kind blows from my friend, I’ve returned to the peace that comes from Jesus.”*

- ***Kindness Brings Honour - Whoever pursues righteousness and kindness will find life, righteousness, and honour. (Proverbs 21:21)***

Once again, kindness sometimes carries a connotation of insignificance and failure. Kindness might seem like a nice ideal to some, but if they really want to “make a difference” or “be someone important,” then they can’t be kind all the time.

First of all, this is not true. As we have already demonstrated, kindness is powerful, and it can change the person you never thought would change.

Secondly, it is slightly true. This world promises certain honours, many of which could be missed by a person who was kind all the time. Yet, as Christians, we are called to strive for a greater honour. We are called to imitate the sufferings of Jesus, which result in an imperishable honour.

There is great honour waiting for those who pursue kindness—for they are passionate for good works for the sake of Jesus Christ.

Don’t miss out on this honour by walking in the way of the world.

- ***Kindness Prepares for Repentance - Or do you presume on the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance? (Romans 2:4)***

So, kindness has significant power, and its power is not meant to simply make us feel better about ourselves. The power of kindness is seen in how it leads people to repentance.

Remember this next time someone makes you angry. You want them to know how they hurt you, and you want them to never do it again. When I am in this position, I usually use a different instrument than kindness. I may use spite, gossip, or coldness, thinking to myself that kindness will only encourage their behaviour.

This fruit of the Spirit entails forbearance, yet Scripture also tells us that God uses kindness to lead us into repentance.

Why should I use a tool other than the one God chooses to use?

(Author: David Wetherall, MA English - <https://unlockingthebible.org/>)

Closing Prayers

God of Peace

Sow seeds of hope in cruel and barren lands.

*When oppression, cruelty, war, and fear, are all that is known,
and suffering the daily experience.*

*When famine, hunger, thirst, disease, greet every morning,
denying basic sustenance,
How easy to say, "there is no God".
How easy to turn aside, to label You, Lord, an irrelevance.*

*You, who are living water, bread of life, the one who offers
deliverance,
who suffered, died, and rose, bringing hope that there is more to life
than this.*

*Bless all those who in despair, and dark places,
look to you for assurance.
Bring to them comfort and peace, and where, there is neither,
bring to them abundance.*

God of Peace

Sow seeds of hope in cruel and barren lands.

(johnbirch@faithandworship.com)

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>

Helpful Links

- **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/>
- **BABC Main Website** www.bishopbaptists.co.uk

Please feel free to explore the website and subscribe to [our YouTube channel](#) and those of our contributors to encourage them to continue to provide the valuable content from which we all benefit.