

DAILY PRAYER POINTS

SUNDAY – There is a reason the Lord has brought you to this new week. Pray that He will shine brightly through you so that everyone that comes across you this week may know His presence in you and be blessed by your words and actions.

MONDAY – Thank God for the strength and ability to serve Him each day through Jesus Christ, in the power of the Spirit. Pray that we'll all know God's blessing and strength in serving the Lord with joy and thankfulness.

TUESDAY – Thank God that you can draw near to him with the full assurance that faith brings. (Heb.10:22)

WEDNESDAY – Ask God to help Session and the Committee of Management as we prayerfully plan for the future of St Andrew's during an uncertain time within the PCQ and Australia, as a whole.

THURSDAY – Pray for **Alison MacLean & Gladys Marnock**

FRIDAY – Continue to pray for those in need of God's healing and comforting hand: Belinda Birch, Edith Collins, John Donnell, Kevin Petrofski Jr and Margaret Petrofski, and Dawn Robinson. Pray also for blessings on those who can't get to church: Audrey Armstrong, Del Finn, Carol Gillett, Joey Kelly, Gladys Marnock, Millie McCarthy, Heather McGaw, Marie McKee, Mavis Smith, and David Valentine.

SATURDAY – Give thanks that in all circumstances our Heavenly Father knows our needs and supplies them richly to us in His Son and His Spirit.

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THE ANCHOR

NEWSLETTER OF THE ST ANDREW'S PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH



IN THIS ISSUE:

AN ADMIRABLE CHURCH

BIBLE READING PLAN READING ABOUT KING DAVID

WESTMINSTER SHORTER CATECHISM

SPEAKING APPROPRIATELY

DAILY PRAYER POINTS

AN ADMIRABLE CHURCH.

By DAVID COOK

St HELEN'S CHURCH OF ENGLAND IS IN THE MIDDLE OF THE CITY OF LONDON, very close to the Headquarters of Lloyds and the Bank of England, in Bishopsgate. The church building itself is impressive, and dates back to the thirteenth century.

Yet what I most respect about this church is that at whatever point you interface with it, you are presented with an open Bible. A casual visitor to the

St Helen's building is presented with an array of options, CD's, pamphlets, books, all broadcasting the Christian Gospel.



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At midweek services and on Sundays the Bible is always read very well and then explained and applied by the preacher who has seriously prepared his sermon. The gathering of this Church is all about hearing God speak. The preaching at St Helen's, is expository, faithful to the text of Scripture and engaging to the crowded congregation.

Growth groups are held during the week in the adjacent St Andrews Undershaft, recently renovated to provide meals for the many groups which gather to study the Bible each week. Drop into St Andrews during the day and you will see pairs of people scattered throughout the building, reading the Bible one to one.

C.H. Spurgeon referred to John Bunyan as a living Bible: 'prick him anywhere, his blood is Bibline, the very essence of the Bible flows from him.' Because of what we believe about the Bible, what is so apparent at St Helen's must be the goal of every Church.

The Bible is God's book – J.I Packer called it 'God's Preaching' – as its source is in God himself, and so is incapable of error. It is self-authenticating, clear, totally necessary in order to know Him, and is the final court of appeal in all matters of faith and practice.

The late Reformed theologian R. C. Sproul is quoted as saying: 'I think the greatest weakness in the Church today is that almost no one believes that God invests His power in the Bible.' Do you think that is true, or was Sproul being overly pessimistic, since 'almost no one' is a very bleak assessment? He went on: 'Everyone is looking for power in a program, in a technique, in anything and everything except where God has placed it: His word.'

If what Sproul says is the case, it will be evident in our Church preaching programmes. The programme may be top heavy with social issues and topics

condemn that which you have never tried.' Finally, he wrote – or prayed: 'May He who has opened my eyes, open yours.'

There are dangers for us all – of speaking when we are out of our area of expertise; or denouncing sins of which we ourselves are guilty; or of misjudging where our hearers stand. If it only takes a little bit of tweaking to distort the truth, the same can be said of zeal. Jehu serves as a warning here (2 Kings 9-10; Hos.1:3-5).

Calvin said of Christian teachers: 'We therefore need two voices: a gentle voice to encourage those who are teachable and to lead them in the right path, and a different voice to cry out against wolves and thieves, to drive them from the flock and to defend God's pure truth'. This is more difficult than it seems at first. Iron sharpens iron (Prov.27:17), yet it is easy for two sides to drive each other further apart. We are to speak the truth in love (Eph.4:15), but that is not an endorsement of the Aristotelian mean. Jesus once told Peter: 'Get behind me, Satan!' (Matt.16:23) Yet Gamaliel put in a good word for mildness (Acts 5:33-39). The way of wisdom tells us that a soft answer can turn away wrath (Prov.15:1), and a gracious man can make his enemies to be at peace with him (Prov.16:7).

Yet peace is a fragile thing: 'The beginning of strife is like letting out water, so quit before the quarrel breaks out' (Prov.17:14). It is a long-held view that the lack of communication can lead to wars. Maybe so, but too much communication can achieve the same end. The anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God (James 1:20). Whenever each one insists on having the last say, there exists not a chastened and teachable spirit, but the Christian equivalent of 'Which one is Johnny and which one is Amber?'

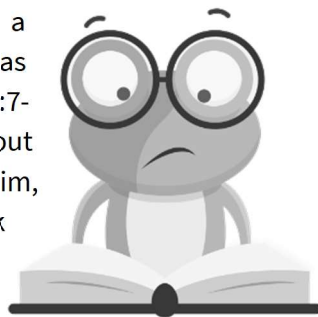
This takes us back to an application of the verses we began with from Jude. Joni Eareckson Tada prayed after reading these verses: 'Lord, forgive me for my nonchalant attitude toward the eternal destiny of my friends, neighbours, coworkers, and family.' Yes, and forgive my lack of self-awareness and blinkered spirit.

With warm regards in Christ, *Rev. Dr Peter Barnes*, **Moderator-General of the Presbyterian Church of Australia**

stained by the flesh.’ Jude seems to think in terms of triplets, but for our purposes the point is that Jude does not have one response for all people.

There are people who are not strong in the faith, and the best thing we can do for them is to work it through in a spirit of kindly mercy. We must be patient with all (2 Tim.2:24-25). It is not Christian to push every view at the same rate (Phil.3:15-16). Sometimes Jesus was harder than at other times – compare Luke 9:50 (‘the one who is not against you is for you’) and Matthew 12:30 (‘whoever is not with me is against me’). He could weep over those who rejected Him and He could denounce them (Luke 19:41; Matt.23:27).

Rev. Thomas Scott was a clueless Anglican minister located near to Olney, where John Newton pastored. Scott was clearly not a Christian as this stage, and in 1775 had said that God would not condemn a sincere Socinian (one who only believed that Jesus was a great man). In reply, Newton pointed to Matthew 7:7-8 and John 7:16-17. Scott was spoiling for a fight, but Newton replied with great patience and kindness to him, and by 1778 Scott was attending Newton’s mid-week meetings, and writing *The Force of Truth*, which is the story of his conversion.



With others the tone becomes more urgent. The angels who come to Sodom to announce God’s judgment on it and to rescue Lot had to make him hurry because he was prone to linger (Gen.19:12-22). Calvin points out that ‘it would not be enough to beckon with the finger, or kindly to stretch forth the hand.’ Context means so much in evaluating our response. Paul thought it appropriate to tell Timothy to be patient in calling people to repent (2 Tim.2:24-25), but he told Titus to rebuke the people of Crete sharply (Tit.1:13).

To his brother-in-law, John Catlett, a solicitor who called himself a free thinker, John Newton felt obliged to adopt a rather vigorous approach. He pressed him: ‘I have experienced the good and the evil on both sides, and you only on one.’ He would add: ‘But here lies the difference, my dear friend, you

and light on in Bible coverage. This is understandable as the culture around us becomes more and more confronting against the Christian worldview, so preachers tend to address the immediate threat to their congregations.

But **Christian maturity comes from understanding and obeying the Bible.** Throughout Acts, Luke shows how the Gospel is unstoppable in its powerful movement from Jerusalem, to the ends of the earth, Rome. Again and again we see how the Gospel is God’s powerful means of saving unbelievers. In Acts 20:32 Paul commends the elders of the Ephesian Church ‘to God and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified.’ So not only does this word bring the unregenerate to life (James 1: 18), it also leads the regenerate to Christian maturity and Christlikeness of character (2 Tim 3: 16-17).

Martin Luther stressed that the people of God are recognised by their possession of the holy word of God: ‘And even if there were no other sign than this alone, it would still suffice to prove that a Christian, a holy people must exist there, for God’s word cannot be without God’s people, and conversely God’s people cannot be without God’s word.’

So check out the literature available at your Church; encourage the Bible reading roster to be well prepared; equip the growth group leaders for their leadership, perhaps encourage them to part-time study at a Bible College; challenge members about reading the Bible one to one, it will be a mutual benefit ; encourage a congregational Bible reading plan.

Think about having a Saturday afternoon and evening introduction to a Bible book which will be studied that term. And then check out your preaching plan: do you have a balanced nutritional diet. Will you spend time in an Old Testament book, which Gospel will be the focus this year, and which letter? Check what portion of your sermon is spent in explanation of the text, and you may be shocked by how little time you spend in actual exposition.



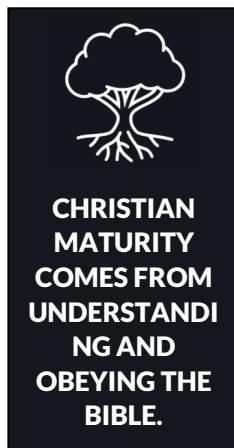
**THE GREATEST
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Ask yourself: ‘At every point at which my church contacts people, does it do so with an open Bible, are our people growing in maturity, through hearing and being encouraged in the doing of the Scripture?’

Kevin Vanhoozer’s *Hearers and Doers* has as its central thesis that Israel was often held captive by secular views of Kingship. The prophets were to declare the counter reality of God’s word. So too the Church can be led astray by idolatrous practices, pursuing technique and programmes rather than fearing God and living according to his counter reality.

Pastors are the doctors of the Church, who minister health to the body of Christ by teaching the Bible. They must de-programme and re-programme disciples, ‘to follow Jesus everywhere, before everyone and at every time’. The Church exists to train disciples to read the Bible and understand their place in the city of God as they inhabit the world.

Vanhoozer quotes C.S. Lewis: “**the Church exists for nothing else but to draw men into Christ and to make them little Christs.**” This is the whole purpose of God for which the whole universe was created. ‘The goal is to train disciples to walk around in the strange new world of the Bible, even as they live in the familiar old world of the present! I finish with Tertullian’s words: **‘We meet to read the books of God’**



KING DAVID

TWO WEEKS ON... BIBLE READING PLAN

TWO WEEKS ON KING DAVID

Despite his glaring flaws, David is described as a man after God’s own heart. His faith and zeal made him the standard against which all Israel’s future kings would be measured.



WEEK 2 | ☐ Day 8, **2 Samuel 6** - The Ark Brought to Jerusalem ☐ Day 9, **2 Samuel 7** - The Lord’s Covenant with David ☐ Day 10, **2 Samuel 11** - David

and Bathsheba ☐ Day 11, **2 Samuel 12** - Nathan Rebukes David ☐ Day 12, **2 Samuel 13** - Amnon and Tamar ☐ Day 13, **2 Samuel 15** - Absalom’s Conspiracy ☐ Day 14, **2 Samuel 18** - David and Ziba

WESTMINSTER SHORTER CATECHISM

The Westminster catechisms begin with the language of glorifying and enjoying God. *These Standards exist to explain in doctrinal terms how Scripture directs us to glorify and enjoy God in all we think, do, and say.* - Burk Parsons

QUESTION 76.

What is the ninth commandment?

A. The ninth commandment is, “*You shall not bear false witness against your neighbour.*”

QUESTION 77.

What is required in the ninth commandment?

A. The ninth commandment requires maintaining and promoting truth between one person and another, as well as maintaining and promoting our neighbour’s good name as well as our own, especially when being a legal witness.

QUESTION 78.

What is forbidden in the ninth commandment?

A. The ninth commandment forbids anything that puts the truth at risk or is injurious to our own or our neighbour’s good name.

SPEAKING APPROPRIATELY

NEAR THE END OF HIS SHORT EPISTLE, JUDE TELLS HIS READERS TO RESPOND WITH SENSITIVITY TO OTHERS, ACCORDING TO THEIR SITUATION (Jude 22-23). Alas, the text is something of a ‘mingle-mangle’, to use John Knox’s description of the English Reformation. The NKJV has two groups but the NIV and ESV have three groups: ‘And have mercy on those who doubt; save others by snatching them out of the fire; to others show mercy, with fear, hating even the garment