

Daily Reflection

Daily Update – Thursday, 24th September

Good Morning Everyone,

The Reflection has been provided by Ian. Thanks Ian!

Today's readings - Ecclesiastes 1:2-11 Psalm 90:1–6 Luke 9:7-9

Pause: Lord Jesus, still our hearts and minds now, as we prepare to hear from your word. Help us to discern your eternal purposes for our lives, how we can and should serve you each day. Show us how to live in a way which pleases you.

Amen



Today's passage in Ecclesiastes makes me think of the hamster, busy working hard on its treadmill. The refrain which the Teacher, Son of David and King of Jerusalem quotes runs through this book:

"Meaningless! Meaningless! Utterly meaningless!"

"... meaningless, a chasing after wind."

"everything was meaningless, a chasing after the wind"

Eeyore would have been proud of him!

But he does have a point, doesn't he? In this first chapter of Ecclesiastes the Teacher points out the cyclical nature of our world and the fact that we seem to continue looping round and round, not moving forward at all. People work hard, generations come and go, and yet the world continues pretty much the same. Nature cycles around and there seems to be no end to it. Even things which appear new and innovative have actually been around for a long time, in most cases.

So what are we to make of the Teacher's observations? They seem to fly in the face of "modern" thinking, which would have us believe that things are improving over time, and that there is measurable progress.

At the most basic level, the Teacher is spot on. It is a fact that our lives are short and generally full of toil and uncertainty. We try to push ahead, and yet time, and ultimately death, overtake us and bring all our efforts to naught. Even wise people who work hard and live prudently end up leaving everything behind. Their funeral services are just the same as those of fools, the idle and the profligate. We cannot control our own destiny, we are ephemeral and temporary.

Let's try to sift through what the Teacher says, as there are some key principles which teach us about God's plans and also how we can align ourselves with his purposes, in the strength which only he provides.

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Fear God, respect and honour him: In chapter 5, the Teacher turns to how we should relate to God. How should we, ephemeral being as we are, relate to the eternal creator God, who made all things and sustains them by his power? We need to guard our steps, listen first and make sure our words are few. We need to be quick to keep our promises to God. We honour God by realising he is eternal and unchanging, he wants us to respect and revere him (3:14 - fearing God implies reverence and awe, respecting him).

It's not the destination, it's how you travel: The Teacher has highlighted that we all end up in the same place. So what is important is how we live, how we relate to others, how we conduct ourselves day to day. He urges us to enjoy our work, as there is nothing better (3:22). So take time to enjoy what you do day by day and how you relate to others. Less speed and more time to relate....

Enjoy God's gifts to us here and now: God has set eternity in our hearts and has made everything beautiful in its time (3:11) so we need to take time to enjoy what he has made. We need to be happy and do good while we live (3:12) and find satisfaction in our toil (3:13).

So when things are getting you down and as you ponder the thrust of recent news bulletins, let's not be discouraged or downcast, fearing that all we relied on is in tatters around us. Rather let us focus on the Lord God who made heaven and earth and who calls us to seek out the eternity which he has put in each of our hearts. Our few verses in Luke show us how puzzled Herod the tetrarch was on hearing all the things which Jesus was doing. A foretaste of eternity was being shown, as Jesus and his disciples healed the sick and raised the dead. Let us cling firmly to the author of life, even Jesus, and find our hope in him alone.

Prayer

Almighty God,
thank you for sending the Lord Jesus to usher in your kingdom
thank you that he died on the cross for each one of us,
so we can be brought close to you
Show us how to live and witness to your glory
that others will come to know you.
Keep us relying on your amazing promises and
resting in your unfailing strength,
now and in all our days;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen

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Remember...



News

Sunday services in October

Please email me at admin@stjohnssouthbourne.com if you would like to come to any services in October.

The cut-off date for booking for each week's service is the Thursday before.

If you are unable to attend a Sunday service that you have booked, email the admin address of phone 01243 375576.

Urgent Help Required

We are in need of someone to help with the video editing for the Sunday services. This involves taking the various video/text elements, combining them together, and uploading to the internet. If you or someone you know is interested in helping out or seeing what is involved, please get in touch with Jon Robinson. wardens@stjohnssouthbourne.com



Please turn it off!

If you are in the Church for a service, prayer or just a visit, can you make sure all the sockets and lights are turned off before you leave? This will help us keep the building safe and save us money on electric bills! Many thanks.

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Care for the Family are running this course below. If you would like more information, here is the link:

https://www.careforthefamily.org.uk/events/events-online/raising-faith?utm_source=STD&utm_medium=RFE&utm_campaign=RFE&utm_term=RFE&utm_content=RFE



The banner features the Care for the Family logo on the left. The main text reads 'Raising FAITH' with a tagline 'Helping our children find a faith that lasts'. Below this, a paragraph explains that 50% of children in Christian homes do not have their own faith as adults, and encourages parents to model a real faith. It mentions speakers Katharine Hill and Andy Frost. At the bottom, it lists viewing dates (6, 7, 8 Oct), time (7.30pm), and a 'Book here' link.

The theme for this Sunday's evening service is Isaac & Ishmael – Galations 4:21-31.

The Quiz is Back!!!



Humour

If God is watching us, the least we can do is be entertaining.