

Daily Reflection

DAILY REFLECTION

Daily Update – Friday, 9th October

Good Morning Everyone,

Today's Reflection is from Sarah Adams. Thanks Sarah!

Luke 11: 14-26

Today's Gospel reading is one that we read and perhaps consign to "Leave that to Jesus – nothing to do with me". Whilst it is true that for the majority of us, exorcising demons is not going to be part of our daily life, this is still a story that bears taking the time to think about.

This morning, I thought it would be good to consider the reactions of the crowd.

Firstly, we had an overjoyed and no doubt very chatty man, who we can probably infer came to believe in Jesus. There were also people in the crowd who too would become followers of Jesus.

Then we have the group who decided that Jesus was driving out demons, under Satan's own authority. Finally, we have those who decided that this miracle insufficient evidence and asked for a sign from heaven.

It is these last two groups that is worth considering, as we too meet similar people today.

Let's first look at those who attributed the miracle to the power of Beelzebub. Obviously, they could not deny the miracle had happened. They witnessed it with their own eyes. However, to admit that Jesus was the Messiah was unthinkable. So, to their mind, the most rational explanation was that Jesus had to be operating under the authority of the Evil one. Then by implication, they accused their own exorcists of exactly the same thing. As we see from the story, Jesus with ingenious brevity subverts their argument and turns it back on them, showing them to be guilty. After all, why would Satan shoot himself in the foot, by casting out his own demons?

We meet many like this today, who will ask questions like "How can God be a God of love, if he allows, suffering, evil, etc" In and of themselves, these are valid questions, deserving of thoughtful responses. However, we need to think about the motives of the person asking the questions. Are they really searching for answers, or just throwing up as many objections as they can to avoid hearing the Gospel message?

So how about the group that demanded another sign. Perhaps like me, you would have thought a mute man suddenly speaking would be sufficient evidence. But even if we look at the story of Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead, we see that some who witnessed that miracle didn't believe in Jesus either! Perhaps they were hoping for some end times signs as mentioned in the book of Joel: "I will show wonders in the heavens and on the earth, blood and fire and billows of smoke. The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD" ([Joel 2:30-31](#)).

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Today, we meet people who demand signs. It is true that God will perform miracles for those who do not believe. But it is ALWAYS to bring Him glory. Not to be a side show or spectacle.

In essence, just as in the story, today many people from these two groups really don't want the Gospel message to be true. People will say that the evidence leads them away from God. Why is this? The reason is that the answers they find so easily are so hard to embrace. There is a consequence to belief.

Thomas Nagel, a sceptic and philosopher, wrote "I want atheism to be true and I am made uneasy by the fact that some of the most intelligent and well-informed people I know are religious believers. It is not that I disbelieve in God and naturally hope that I am right in my beliefs. It is that I hope there is no God. I don't want there to be a God. I don't want the universe to be like that".

As believer, we hope that clear arguments and beautiful words will win the day. But there are no words or actions strong enough to overcome someone's free will. God has given us the dignity of free will. People say that they don't want to follow Jesus because there are consequences. Jesus didn't convince everybody. His astonishing miracles didn't convince everybody. Neither will we. But this doesn't mean that we should stop trying. 1 Peter 3: 15 tells us to always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect".

Let us pray:

Lord Jesus, thank you for showing us how to love those around us. Today, we pray for our friends and family who do not believe in you. We ask for an outpouring of your Holy Spirit to work in the hearts and minds of those we care for. Help us not to be disheartened when we do not see the results we hope for. But rather make us more determined to share your Good News of salvation with those we meet. Amen

Remember...



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News

Changes to the Daily Updates

As of Monday, the Daily Updates will be changing. Just the Reflections will be sent out daily and on Wednesday there will be a bumper edition with latest news.

We would like to make the Wednesday edition have a more St. John's Community feel, so would welcome any photos, stories of what has been happening in your lives, help needed, anything you would like to share with the church. Please send them to admin@stjohnssouthbourne.com

Centre Opening

We are pleased to say we are ready to accept small group and home group bookings, of groups no more than six at time, in the centre for study and prayer. You may book either the lounge downstairs, or part of the space upstairs, between 1:30 and 3:30. We cannot have more than one group at a time. Booking forms are available from Susie.

To book, you need:

Read and confirm you understand our booking form. It is better to email a reply that you agree.

Wait for confirmation from Susie

Arrange a time with a keyholder (myself or Sue McNeill)

Bring the paper copy with you.

At this point, because this is new to everyone, we prefer not to have block bookings, because several of our church prayer groups meet only once a month and might not get an opportunity otherwise.

I hope this helps us build our fellowship together.

APCM

The St. John's APCM will take place via Zoom on Thursday 15th October. If you are considering standing for the PCC and would like more information, contact Gill Prosser at gill.prosser6@gmail.com.

The forms, financial accounts, minutes, agenda were sent out yesterday. If you know anyone who would like a paper copy, please let me know at admin@stjohnssouthbourne.com

The theme for this Sunday's evening service is Truth and false religion, Galatians 5:1-2

Tearfund Big Quiz



Last year, Tearfund raised an incredible £250,000 with 562 church and more than 26,000 people taking part. This year, the Big Quiz will take place on Saturday 14 November and this time it will be going online.

Put the date in your diaries!



Christmas Boxes – Southbourne Love your Neighbour

This year we are planning to distribute Christmas boxes to 60 families who we delivered to during lockdown. Below is a list of items we need. If you feel you would like to contribute, (it doesn't matter how big or small) could you please contact Jane Inglis at Jane@inglis3.org.

Bistro
Cellotape
Christmas pudding
Christmas cake
Christmas cards
Christmas crackers
Christmas decorations
Christmas lights
Christmas hats/antlers
Chocolate
Cranberry sauce
Custard powder
Fizz drinks no alcohol
Biscuits
Stuffing
Tinsel
Wrapping paper.

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Sunday Services in October

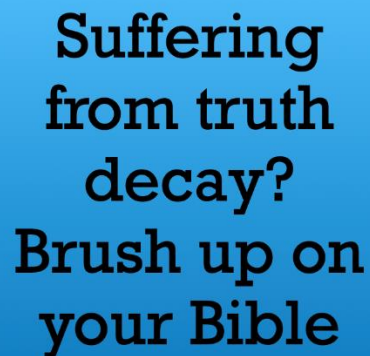
Please email me at admin@stjohnssouthbourne.com if you would like to come to any services in October.

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.

Have you got flu-like symptoms? Please don't attend Church.

Humour



**Suffering
from truth
decay?
Brush up on
your Bible**