



**Team Parish of Christ the King
St Aidan's, Brunton Park**

**Sunday 29th October 2023
Bible Sunday**

This Sunday is Bible Sunday, a day in the year when we reflect together on the place of Scripture in our church and our lives. And the reading set this year from Nehemiah gives an intriguing perspective on our response to God's word. As the people read the book of the Law, they discover both tears and joy. I think as we read the Bible today, and read it as God's word to us, we might discover the same.

So first the people discover tears. We're told: 'all the people wept when they heard the words of the law.' God's word in scripture first challenges and convicts. It exposes to us the ways in which we fail to live lives that are faithful to God. We discover in the Bible not only a loving God, but a God who calls us to lives that reflect his love. Yet to look around us, at ourselves and our world, surely there is a lack of love that should move us to tears. When we see broken lives and broken relationships, perhaps the word of God at times, ought not to comfort and reassure but to convict and challenge. Perhaps it ought to make us weep.

But if first the people discover tears, secondly they discover joy. They are told: 'this day is holy to our LORD; and do not be grieved, for the joy of the LORD is your strength.' Out of their tears comes rejoicing. The tears of challenge and conviction, turn to the joy of the Lord. And my experience of reading the Bible is that it is a joyful text. That doesn't mean it's an easy text, it isn't. It doesn't mean it's always comforting or reassuring, it isn't. But my experience of reading Scripture is that, as I hear God speak through it of his grace and goodness, and as that grace and goodness meets my own experience, that there is deep joy in that reading. This text, as I read it, tells not only of a distant God and his past acts, but of a present God who continues to be at work in my life. And in that reading, whether it challenges or comforts, whether it convicts or reassures, I've often found a deep and sustaining joy. That is exactly what the people of Israel discover as Ezra and Nehemiah read the law of the Lord: as they hear God's word to them, they rejoice, because the joy of the Lord is their strength. So, as we hear God's word to us today, offering both challenge and comfort, perhaps we might discover both the tears of sorrow and repentance, and the joy of knowing the abundant goodness of God's grace.

Nehemiah 8.1-3, 8-12

All the people gathered together into the square before the Water Gate. They told the scribe Ezra to bring the book of the law of Moses, which the LORD had given to Israel. Accordingly, the priest Ezra brought the law before the assembly, both men and women and all who could hear with understanding. This was on the first day of the seventh month. He read from it facing the square before the Water Gate from early morning until midday, in the presence of the men and the women and those who could understand; and the ears of all the people were attentive to the book of the law. So they read from the book, from the law of God, with interpretation. They gave the sense, so that the people understood the reading. And Nehemiah, who was the governor, and Ezra the priest and scribe, and the Levites who taught the people said to all the people, 'This day is holy to the LORD your God; do not mourn or weep.' For all the people wept when they heard the words of the law. Then he said to them, 'Go your way, eat the fat and drink sweet wine and send portions of them to those for whom nothing is prepared, for this day is holy to our LORD; and do not be grieved, for the joy of the LORD is your strength.' So the Levites stilled all the people, saying, 'Be quiet, for this day is holy; do not be grieved.' And all the people went their way to eat and drink and to send portions and to make great rejoicing, because they had understood the words that were declared to them.

Matthew 24.30-35

Jesus said to his disciples: 'The sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see "the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven" with power and great glory. And he will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other. 'From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near. So also, when you see all these things, you know that he is near, at the very gates. Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all these things have taken place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.'

TODAY

9:30am: **Bible Sunday** Rev'd Gerard Rundell leads our service

THE WEEK AHEAD

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| Mon | 7:30pm, Zoom: Bible Study Group |
| Wed | 10.00am, Church: BCP Midweek Eucharist 7.30pm, Community Room: Alpha |
| Thurs | 2:00pm, Community Room: Prayer and Praise 8:00pm, Community Room: Men's Group – Talk by Anthony Atkinson |
| Sat | 10am, Community Room – Saturday Café |
| Sun 29th | 9:30am, All Saints Family Service Rev'd Gerard Rundell leads our family service with readings from Revelation 7.9-17, 1 John 3.1-3 & Matthew 5.1-12 |

DATES FOR THE DIARY

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| Thurs 9 th | 2:00pm: Film Club – The Book Thief , Community Room |
| Sat 18 th | 10:00am: Christmas Market , Church |

NOTICES

SUNDAY SERVICE – today's live link: <https://bit.ly/BibleSunday23>

ST AIDAN'S CHRISTMAS FAIR - will be held in Church on Saturday 18th November at 10am. Donations for the following stalls would be welcome: Toys, Bottle stall, Tombola, Raffle, Cake stall. Help on the afternoon of 17th, to move chairs and get tables from the Community Centre and to put everything back after the fair would be welcome. We also need volunteers to man the stalls on the day. Please let the Church Wardens or Ben Pullan know if you can help.

CHILDREN'S SOCIETY COFFEE MORNING – we raised an amazing £356 at last week's Saturday café. Thank you to everyone who supported this event.

ROTA'S – are at the back of church for both Saturday café and Sunday service coffee. Please add your name to the rota if you are able to help.

PLANNED GIVING SCHEME - if you would like to set up a regular financial gift to support St Aidan's please find the link is below. Our church is funded entirely by donations so we are hugely grateful for all the support we receive.

BIBLE STUDY GROUP –continues on Monday at 7.30pm on Zoom, details below. All welcome. Further information from Ken Newitt, kmnewitt@outlook.com.

ZOOM CODES – all our Zoom sessions will use only the following details:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/7573778713?pwd=NGVjcTRLQjBEaStqYjFDSm1KOURtQT09>

Meeting ID: 757 377 8713 Passcode: StAidan

BOOKING ZOOM MEETINGS: if you would like to use the St Aidan's Zoom account for a church meeting, please contact Janice

FOOD BANK – any items placed in the box at the back of church will be donated to Kenton Foodbank.

PLANNED GIVING - If you would like to set up a regular financial gift to support St Aidan's please click on the following link

<https://www.parishgiving.org.uk/donors/find-your-parish/brunton-park-st-aidan-newcastle-upon-tyne>

For Our Prayers: St Aidan's Cycle of Prayer

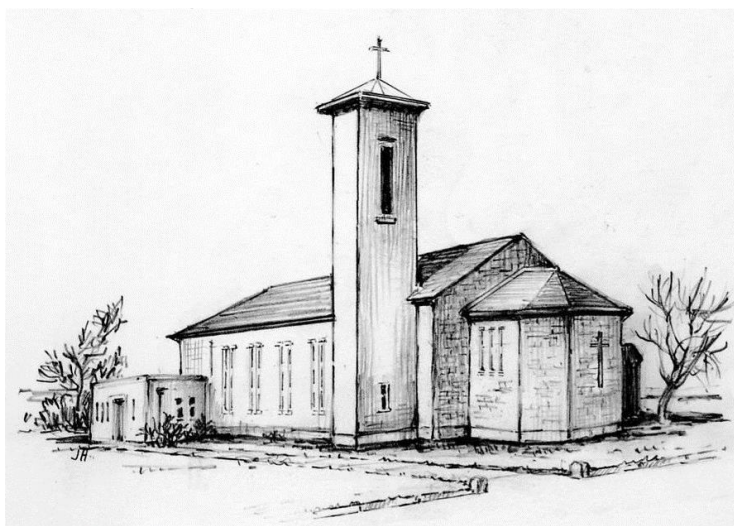
For the church – Churches in our Deanery: Centre of Newcastle Parishes and City Centre Chaplaincy. Sidespeople, our Saturday Café, and all involved in our ministry of welcome

For the community – Uniformed groups

For the world – all countries facing hardship and conflict. For our own national and political life

For those in need - Gladys Johnston, Esther Wooler, Alan Gregg, Martin Seaton, Jack Murgatroyd, Bruce Smith

For those who have died – Ann Craig and on their anniversaries: Joan Carnaby, Robert Atwell, Joan Rockiffe, Gillian Holt, Sylvia Caldicott



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