

Connected

Sunday 12th September 2021
15th Sunday after Trinity

Sermon Snippets



Over this Autumn we're going to be looking in our Sunday sermons at the Old Testament book of Nehemiah. If you're unfamiliar with the book here's a little bit of background – many of the people of Israel were in exile in Persia but were gradually being allowed to return to Jerusalem. If Jerusalem was ever to become viable again it was vital it needed its defensive walls. Nehemiah hears the news of the first group to return to Jerusalem but unfortunately the walls haven't been built. So Nehemiah leads another group with rebuilding the walls as its mission. As we go through this book we will discover that this was no easy task and required the work and involvement of everybody But we'll also see that the rebirth of Jerusalem wasn't just about physical walls but also (and more importantly) about a spiritual resetting. Now, in our context we are fortunate to have physical buildings but there is a sense that as we start to meet together in our churches that we have the opportunity for a spiritual "resetting" as well. What might that look like for you or me I wonder?

We start in chapter 1 by looking at how Nehemiah responds to the disappointing news that nothing so far has been done about the walls for Jerusalem. He doesn't sulk or blame someone else but rather brings the situation to God, asks for his help and then is ready to act on opportunities God may provide. It's a challenge to us when we hear disappointing news or face difficulties – have we the humility to bring them to God and the courage to act on any opportunities he might provide?

Tom



Verse For The Week

"But if you return to me and obey my commands and live by them, then even if you are exiled to the ends of the earth, I will bring you back to the place I have chosen for my name to be honored.

Nehemiah Chapter 1 verse 9

Prayer Pointers

This week we pray for our World.

Monday

Pray for the peace of the World, remembering especially the ongoing strife in Yemen, Syria and Afghanistan.

Pray for the innocent sufferers and refugees of war.

Tuesday

Pray for an end to oppression in the World, remembering especially Myanmar, Eritrea and North Korea.

Pray for all those who campaign for freedom and democracy.

Wednesday

Pray for freedom of worship in the World, remembering especially China, Pakistan and Iran. Pray for our persecuted brothers and sisters as they try to practise their faith.

Thursday

Pray for the health of our World, remembering especially India, Brazil and South Africa, overwhelmed by Covid 19.

Pray for those who work in the health services of developing nations as they struggle against the disease with very limited resources.

Friday

Pray for the state of our World, remembering especially Greece and Turkey, fighting wildfires, and the island Nations, in danger from rising sea levels.

Pray for wisdom for the governments of the World in tackling environmental issues.

Saturday

As you reflect on this week's prayers, give thanks to the Lord that he has blessed our Country with peace, democracy, freedom of worship, a good health service and a moderate climate.

When we look at the World, we have so much to be grateful for: Praise the Lord.

Teaching Series

Nehemiah 1: 1-11	It starts with prayer
Ezra 1: 1-5	The big picture
Nehemiah 2: 4-16	All skills put into God's hands
Nehemiah 3: 1-12	All together now
Nehemiah 4: 7-23	Dealing with opposition
Nehemiah 8: 1-8	Reforming hearts
Nehemiah 9: 1-6, 32-35	Godly reminders
Nehemiah 10: 28-33	Walking 'in the law'

What's On This Week

Monday 13 September

Ladies Together at 2.30pm in Christ Church

Tuesday 14 September

The Beacon at 12noon at Emmanuel Church

Wednesday 15 September

Book Club at 7pm at Christ Church

Thursday 16 September

*Welcome Group at 2.30pm at Emmanuel Church
Craft & Chat at 2.30pm in the Spire Centre*

Saturday 18 September

Open Garden Event hosted by Alan & Maureen starting at 2.30pm

Contact Details

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Watch this Sunday's Service

at www.ccwsm.org.uk

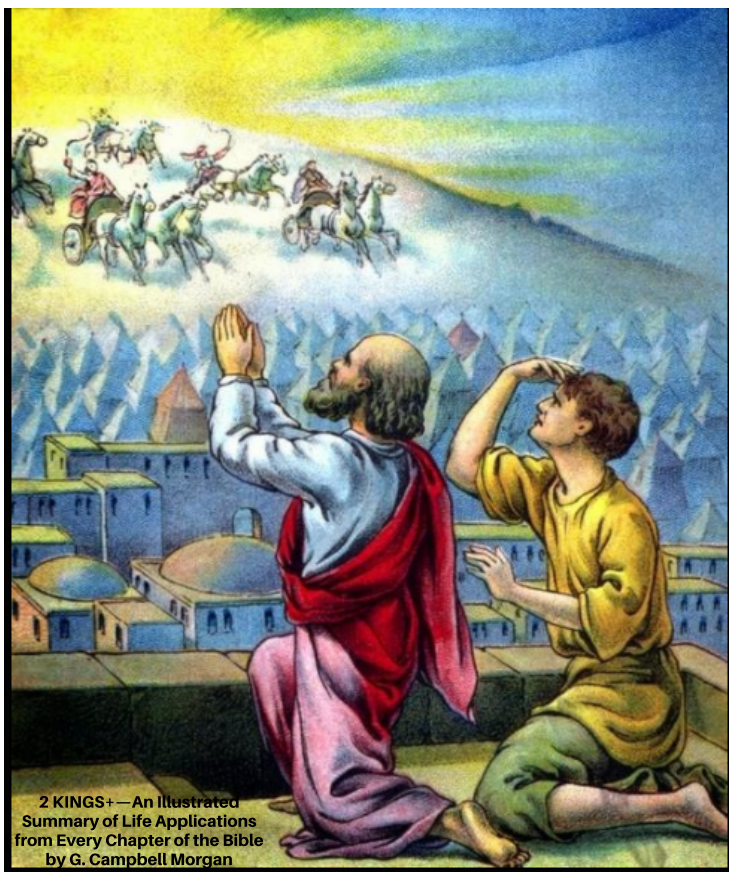
Go to the 'Church Life' menu and click on the 'Sunday Services' page.

We Are Not Alone!

I love the story in 2 Kings 6:8-22 where Elisha and Gehazi awake one morning to find themselves surrounded by the enemy. What they then see though is a far greater angelic army with horses and chariots of fire surrounding Elisha. Elisha tells Gehazi, "Those who are with us are far more than those who are with them".

These wildly testing times can cause us to feel afraid or anxious, so let's not forget that God is with us and He is so much greater than any enemy. He is the source of all that we need for life. Comfort, strength, hope, provision, reassurance, peace and, perhaps most importantly, love. The enemy looked overwhelming to Gehazi, but nothing overwhelms God, He is greater than every situation we face. And if God is for us who can be against us? The incredible love of God surrounds us, His angels have been commanded to guard us in all our ways, Jesus intercedes for us in heaven, we are NOT alone in our situation. We can put our faith in God. He is our provider, our strong tower, He never sleeps or slumbers and nothing takes Him by surprise. So, when we feel overwhelmed or afraid, we pray and those prayers go up to Him, and we can rest in His presence and provision. Today, we can put our hope in God knowing that we are not alone. We are in this together and we can put our confidence and trust in Him.

*Courtesy of the Christian Gift Company -
www.thechristiangiftcompany.co.uk*



2 KINGS+ — An Illustrated
Summary of Life Applications
from Every Chapter of the Bible
by G. Campbell Morgan

DEAR LIFE: A DOCTOR'S STORY OF LOVE, LOSS & CONSOLATION (Rachel Clarke)

The recommendations for this book absolutely sold it to me; "shows us the very best of human nature"; "it sings with joy & kindness"; "moving, thought-provoking"; "touching & profound"; "heart-wrenchingly tender", etc, etc. Written by a doctor, it tells in part her own early life, becoming a doctor, & then gradually realising that patients at the end of their lives needed more than hospital doctors had time to give them.

She changed to palliative care in a hospice, & discovers immeasurable joy in helping people who are dying to live during their last days to the full. She breaks rules to ensure that couples of 50 or 60 years marriage get time to be together; she enables patients' wants to be fulfilled if it is at all within her power, & most of all she listens. She says that in a hospice there is more of what matters in life; "more love, more strength, more kindness, more joy, more tenderness, more grace, more compassion than you could ever imagine." Patients show her how to live in the present; they show her what matters most in life; they show her what selfless devotion between families is – & then her own father, once a doctor, becomes ill with terminal cancer & she has to juggle the calm & practical advice in a doctoral capacity with the strain of being a daughter watching her beloved father slowly dying.

The book brought me to tears more than once, but in a good way. She is an atheist, but she continues to bring meaning to the last days of her patients, with great insight into how the seemingly small things – holding a hand, giving a hug, giving a patient access to nature – can lessen pain both mental & physical. She quotes a line from one of Philip Larkin's poems: "What will survive of us is love". As Christians we know about the survival of the soul but, in the meantime, for those of us left on earth when a loved one dies, love is what survives. For myself or for a loved one,* I would wish for a doctor who cares in the way that Rachel Clarke does.

*Since reading the book & writing this, I lost John to Covid. The care he received in the BRI was just as I had read; the staff were tender, caring & patient, with John & with me. I got my wish.

Pat