

Tuckingmill Baptist Church, Camborne



February 2022

Something unique is happening this month! We're lucky that we still have time to prepare for this one momentous second. Late in the evening of one particular day in February, digital clocks and calendars will capture the instant that it will be

22.22.22

22/2/22

And there's more! It will be nearly 89 years until there's another date and time like it, on the 11th January 2111. I know, I know, some of you just can't wait for the evening of the 22nd February 2222!!

And others ... perhaps most or even all of you ... will probably shrug your shoulders and

think (or even say) *Big deal!* or something comparable.

And that shows that we have some kind of instinct to distinguish between the urgent and the important.

Back in 1999 - and the immediately preceding years - there was a LOT of fuss about the coming millennium. It wasn't just that year numbers would now start with a 2 instead of a 1, but do you remember "the millennium bug"? There was the fear that some computers would just lock up and cease functioning, because no provision had been made, back in the early days of computing, for years beginning with 2. They were all presumed to be 19-something. So what might happen in hospitals or other places where computers



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were in charge of life-critical functions?

We need, though, to train our instincts as regards “urgent” and “important”. Things increase in *urgency* as a particular deadline approaches. If you don’t do something, increasingly, *right now* ... you may miss this opportunity forever. But just because something becomes *urgent* does not make it also become *important*.

If you want to do something to particularly celebrate Twos-Day (the name I’ve just coined for the particular point of time I mentioned earlier), then time is starting to run out. But no matter how close it is to that exciting moment, its importance (or total lack of it) remains constant.

It’s just a number. Just like when as a kid I used to get excited if I saw that our car was about to notch up a new round thousand number of miles on the dashboard. I would watch avidly as the tenths of miles clicked past ... but what did reaching that milestone somewhere on the other side of Bodmin really achieve, in even the *small* scheme of things? The last three digits spell out the answer: three big fat zeros!

In church life, too, we can sometimes get snagged or hung up on something that is urgent - the time window in which to do some-

thing is increasingly small - and attribute a false importance to it.

And over the next few months, we need as a church to think carefully through what kind of things we really regard as important to maintain. It is only too possible to keep things going long past their sell-by date, simply because we can - simply because circumstances do not *compel* us to close them down.

There are nice-to’s, and then there are *need*-to’s.

Come a Saturday night, it is *urgent* for me to pull together a notices sheet for distribution on the Sunday. If it’s going to go out at all. Is the notice sheet - or sermon notes and questions - *nice*-to, or *need*-to?

The same with this magazine. I *hope* you think it’s at least *nice*-to ... but ... *need*-to?

Singing along to (usually) newer songs on video? Running Zoom for the people who can’t visit us in person? Recording the talks? Posting them on our website? *Having* a church website ... having a church website *with up-to-date* information?

Nice-to’s, or need-to’s?



There are some uncomfortable choices ahead, because we'll not necessarily be able to maintain *all* of these. So what are our priorities? And do *our* priorities conform to what *Scripture* sets out to be our priorities?

There are some things that we just have to let go of, because, when we stop to think about it more clearly, they're just not important enough. Or, perhaps, there are other things that are clearly more important to us ... or, more importantly, to God.

So we're not commanded to have a set number of meetings each week. The times are not set in stone. Each church calls its own shots - though I do wish that more would remember that some people (some of *their* people, even) are nowadays pretty much forced to work on Sundays ... so when and how will *they* get the fellowship they need?).

We've varied the time of our Thursday prayer meeting, a.m. or p.m. - though we might need to make a bit more effort to keep up on which it is *this* week. We have the options of Zoom support for meetings - though we need to make sure that that does not become too much a dependency that detracts from *in person* meeting.

And, as I'm sure you know by now, there is an important Church Meeting coming up this month. For once, I've left the

"Members" word out, because it's not being limited only to those in formal membership here. It's for anyone and everyone who is concerned about the future of the church. And the suggestion is that there will deliberately *not* be Zoom coverage of this: discussions will need to be face to face, without the distractions of animals, kids, or a dodgy connection.



Already you should have been circulated about the kind of decisions that you will need to make, so please do think through these matters, and make them matters of prayer.

And I said *you* deliberately, a moment ago, because these are decisions that *you* will need to make *about* and therefore *in* my and Jenny's absence.

Folks, the next few months are going to be uncomfortable for us all, but that is intended to spare you a greater discomfort this time next year, as I retire instead of merely taking a sabbatical leave. There are decisions that are both urgent and important to take.

We promise that we will be praying for you, too.

Peter and Jenny Ham

Sunday meetings:

	10.00 a.m.	6.30 p.m. (cafe church)
6 th February	Matthew 24	Following on from a.m.
13 th February	Marriage Sunday guest service	Video
20 th February	Matthew 25:1-30	Following on from a.m.
27 th February	Matthew 25:31-46	Following on from a.m.
6 th March	Matthew 26:1-16	Following on from a.m.

Other meetings:

9 th February	6.30	<i>Treasure Seekers</i>
10 th February	10.45	Prayer meeting
12 th February	10.00	Prayer meeting
17 th February	7.00	Church meeting
23 rd February	6.30	<i>Treasure Seekers</i>
24 th February	7.30	Mission prayer meeting
26 th February	7.30	Rendezvous: Robert Amess
2 nd March	6.30	<i>Treasure Seekers</i>
3 rd March	10.45	Prayer meeting



	Stewards	Teas	Flowers	Creche	Cleaning
6 Feb	Heather	Heather / John B	Marsha		Peter / Jenny
13 Feb	Kay	Arwen / Jennifer	Jenny		Heather / Kay
20 Feb	Jeny	June / Phil	Lilian		Greg / Marsha
27 Feb	Greg	Marsha / Jenny	Kay	...	J/J/J Carter
6 Mar	Heather	Heather / John B	Marsha		Peter / Jenny
13 Mar	Kay	Arwen / Jennifer	Jenny		Heather / Kay
20 Mar	Jenny	June / Phil	Lilian		Greg / Marsha
27 Mar	Greg	Marsha / Jenny	Kay		J/J/J Carter

(Cleaning is for the week *following* the stated Sunday)

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9 Wrong Ways to Read the Bible (And One Better Way)

Dane C. Ortlund
(Naperville Presbyterian Church in Naperville, Illinois)

A Book of Good News

Many of us approach the Bible not as oxygenating, but as suffocating. We see the Bible lying there on the end table. We know we should open it. Sometimes we do. But it is usually with a sense of begrudged duty. Life is demanding enough, we think. Do I really need more demands? Do I have to hear even more instruction telling me how to live?



That's an understandable feeling. But it is lamentably wrong. And it brings me to the central thing I want to say about the Bible as we think about how real sinners get traction for real change in their lives. The Bible is good news, not a pep talk. News. What is news? It is reporting on something that has happened. The Bible is like the front page of the newspaper, not the advice column. To be sure, the Bible also has plenty of instruction. But the exhortations and commands of Scripture flow out of the Bible's central message, like ribs flowing out of a spine or sparks from a fire or rules of the house for the kids. Paul said that the Old Testament was written so that "through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope" (Romans

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15:4). He said, “The sacred writings . . . are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus” (2 Timothy 3:15). The Bible is help, not oppression. It is given to buoy us along in life, not drag us down. Our own dark thoughts of God are what cause us to shrink back from opening and yielding to it.



When we yawn over the Bible, that's like a severe asthmatic yawning over the free offer of a ventilator while gasping for air. Read the Bible asking not mainly whom to imitate and how to live but what it shows us about a God who loves to save and about sinners who need saving.

Wrong Ways to Read the Bible

Perhaps it seems obvious that the Bible is good news. How else would we read it? Here are nine common but wrong ways to read the Bible:

The **warm fuzzies** approach — reading the Bible for a glowing, subjective experience of God, ignited by the words of the text, whether we understand what they actually mean or not. Result: frothy reading.

The **grumpy** approach — reading the Bible out of nothing but a vague sense that we're supposed to, to get God off our backs for the day. Result: resentful reading.

The **gold mine** approach — reading the Bible as a vast, cavernous, dark mine, in which one occasionally stumbles upon a nugget of inspiration. Result: confused reading.

The **hero** approach — reading the Bible as a moral hall of fame that gives us one example after another of heroic spiritual giants to emulate. Result: despairing reading.

The **rules** approach — reading the Bible on the lookout for commands to obey to subtly reinforce a sense of personal superiority. Result: Pharisaical reading.

The **Indiana Jones** approach — reading the Bible as an ancient document about events in the Middle East a few thousand years ago that are irrelevant to my life today. Result: bored reading.

The **magic eight-ball** approach — reading the Bible as a road map to tell me where to work, whom to marry, and what car to buy. Result: anxious reading.

The **Aesop's Fables** approach — reading the Bible as a loose collection of nice stories strung together independently, each with a nice moral at end. Result: disconnected reading.

The **doctrine** approach — reading the Bible as a theological repository to plunder for ammunition for our next theology debate at Starbucks. Result: cold reading.

The Right Way

There is some truth to each of these approaches. But to make any of them the dominant lens through which we read Scripture is to turn the Bible into a book it was never intended to be. The right way to read the Bible is the gospel approach. This means we read every passage as somehow contributing to the single, overarching storyline of Scripture, which culminates in Jesus.

Just as you wouldn't parachute into the middle of a novel, read a paragraph out of context, and expect to understand all that it means, you cannot expect to understand all that a passage of Scripture means without plotting it in the big arc of the Bible's narrative. And the main story of the Bible is that God sent his Son, Jesus, to do what Adam and Israel and we ourselves have failed to do — honour God and obey him fully.



Every word in the Bible contributes to that message. Jesus himself said so. In a theology debate with the religious elite of the day, Jesus told those who claimed to be faithful to Moses and thus opposed to Christ, “If you believed Moses, you would believe me; for he wrote of me” (John 5:46). Jesus told his disciples, “Everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms” — shorthand for the entire Old Testament — “must be fulfilled” (Luke 24:44).

The Bible is good news. It must be read as gospel. And the result of this approach is transforming reading. We grow. As Luther said:

He who would correctly and profitably read Scripture should see to it that he finds Christ in it; then he finds life eternal without fail. On the other hand, if I do not so study and understand Moses and the prophets as to find that Christ came from heaven for the sake of my salvation, became man, suffered, died, was buried, rose, and ascended into heaven so that through him I enjoy reconciliation with God, forgiveness of all my sins, grace, righteous-

ness, and life eternal, then my reading in Scripture is of no help whatsoever to my salvation.

I may, of course, become a learned man by reading and studying Scripture and preach what I have acquired; yet all this would do me no good whatever.

The Defining Habit

So as you seek to grow in Christ by becoming a deeper human, accept and embrace the truth that you will go deeper with Christ no further than you go into Scripture. To read Scripture is to read of Christ. To read it is to hear his voice. And to hear his voice of comfort and counsel is to hear an invitation to become the human being God has destined you to be.

So build Bible reading into your life in the very same way you build breakfast into your life. After all, we humans are habit-forming creatures. Our morning coffee, our evening dessert, the way we care for our vehicles, our methods for decompressing such as jogging or movies or bird-watching — and all our habits reflect an acquired taste, over a long period of time, resulting in daily rituals without which we do not feel we have lived a normal day.

And I want to say: Make the Bible your central daily ritual. Make it your habit without which you have not lived a normal day. By no means allow this to become a law towering over and condemning you. God's favour does not take a hit when you fail to read the Bible some days. But consider yourself undernourished if skipping that spiritual meal becomes normal. Fight to stay healthy. Stay hooked up to the IV of gospel and help and counsel and promise by reading the Bible each day. Draw life and strength from the Scriptures.

To switch back to our original metaphor: take your asthmatic soul in one hand and the oxygen tank of the Bible in your other hand, and bring the two together. Reading the Bible is inhaling.



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