



**July 2018**

Dear Friends,



Many of you I will have seen me while I was back in the UK. Now I have returned to South Africa it is time to write up what I have been up to in the last few months, apologies, as always, for it has been a while.

### **Real Life, Real Jesus**

Evangelism is a funny thing in South Africa. In this culture many people would call themselves Christians and go to church. However, there are many false teachers in South Africa, who though claiming to teach the gospel of Christ actually preach a mixture of works religion and prosperity gospel. In this context often our aim is to teach those who consider themselves to be Christians what the true gospel of Jesus is and the free grace of God which is held out to them.

Each year we devote a month to do exactly that in what we call our outreach month. This year, we called it 'Real Life, Real Jesus' and I spent four Sundays preaching through John 3 and 4, as Jesus unpacks what the famous verse, John 3:16, really means. It is always a privilege to teach God's word and it was wonderful to be able to point people to the real Jesus, who offers eternal life.



Over the month we had a series of special events, all of which were hugely encouraging. We had a Mothers' Day high tea, where the women met and celebrated together. A friend of mine, Celemtusa Zulu, spoke at our men's breakfast. And we had our now famous international food evening where many people joined us, and it falling on Africa Day meant we could rejoice in the continent.

I am praising God for the whole month. We had some visitors and it was great to see so many from the church serving and getting involved in different ways. Pray on for lasting fruit. Many fringe members of the church joined us for the events and we long that we would all grow to know Christ and know him more fully.

## UK

A few days after the end of our 'Real Life, Real Jesus' month I set off to the UK for about month, from which I have just returned. It was a great privilege to see so many of you, including people I have never met who have been praying for me. Thank you for your partnership in the gospel, and I am sorry if I did not manage to see you while I was over.

It was great to see family, my annual checking in with the nieces and nephews. My brother has even built a house for me, well not quite! It was particular joy to catch up with friends who I have not seen for a long time.

While I was away, Godfrey my curate did a sterling job looking after the church, and my flat! The last couple of years he has really grown as a minister of God's word and a fellow worker in the gospel. At the end of the year, Godfrey comes to the end of his curacy, so pray for wisdom as we consider what the next step might be. We are praying he will continue his great work at Christ Church.

### Johannesburg Bible College

It is incredible to think that I have been out in South Africa for eight years now and at Christ Church Hillbrow for five! The first two and a half years were spent at Johannesburg Bible College and in the last five years I have continued to keep my hand in by teaching one morning a week there. Since the beginning of this year, I have been teaching the Grasping God's Word course at the Auckland Park Campus and the new Soweto Campus. Monday mornings have seemed long, half at one campus and half at the other. It has been a great encouragement though to see people grow in their ability to handle God's word. I am also struck by the diligence and commitment that students have when seeking to get it right. Pray for me as I teach the rest of the year and I think how we might develop the course so that it might continue to equip people in handling God's word for years to come.



### Better

On Sunday, we began our big series for the year as we work through the letter to the Hebrews. So far I have enjoyed getting to grips with the letter. It addresses so many issues that are relevant to our context so please do pray that it will be a book which changes and shapes us as a church. We're calling series 'Better' because Jesus is better than all that might take us away from him.

Thank you as always and God bless,

Ben

## PRAYER POINTS

- Pray for lasting fruit from our outreach month.
- Give thanks for a great time in the UK.
- Pray for our sermon series in the book of Hebrews.

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