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### **A very warm welcome****Sunday 10th September 2023**

**What to Expect:**

Welcome - Tom Wright

Song - It Was Finished Upon That Cross

Confession

Lord’s Prayer

Baptisms

Break

Notices

Prayers - Ollie Pike

Song - He Will Hold Me Fast

Reading - Rachel Chua

Sermon - Luke 18:9-14, Chris Fishlock

Song - There Is No Other Name

Final Words

**Children:** We’re committed to helping all ages know Jesus better so we run age-appropriate groups.
Speak to a staff member or email Tom: tom.wright@snca.co.uk

**Photography and Filming:** Our service is being live streamed. You may feature if you’re in shot of the camera at the back. We may also take photos for our website and social media. Please speak to a steward if you would rather not feature.

**Notices**

**1. Welcome**. Especially if you are new! Please fill in a ‘tell me more’ contact card at the back.



**2. Recently joined?** Scan the QR code to stay up to date with church family news and events: sign up to emails, join our WhatsApp group, subscribe to the calendar.



**3. We’re having a Ceilidh!** Wednesday 13th September, from 6.15pm-9pm.

Dancing, live music, food and a short Bible talk. Tickets: £20, booking essential!

Scan the QR code or visit our website to find out more.

**4. Let The Year Begin!** Please join us on Wednesday 20th evening for our Small Groups launch party, **6.30pm- 8.30pm**: A Bible talk, food and drink.

Talk Recordings & info: www.stnickschurch.org.uk | Spotify ‘St Nick’s Church’

**Luke 18:9-14 Page 877**

Heaven: who actually gets in?

Context: Some thought they were good enough for heaven (v9)

1. The false assurance of the Pharisee (v10-12)
2. The genuine humility of the tax collector (v13)

Conclusion: Only the humble before God get into heaven (v14)

**Questions for discussion:**

-Why do we often think so highly about ourselves?

-Why is humility before God the only way to get into heaven?

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**Carrie’s testimony**

Growing up, I always believed that a God existed ‘out there’ on the basis of creation. But as a typical Asian kid, it was ingrained in me that success was defined by getting good grades which would lead to a stable job. There was therefore no time to be wasted searching for answers about a God who didn’t matter so I shoved him to the back of my mind.

Fast forward decades later, having secured a job in the city, I was thrilled to be able to jet-set around the world and eat to my heart’s content. I was also in a happy relationship – what more could I ask for!

However, despite all my achievements and satisfactions of this world, I still yearned for more. Whilst life seemed perfect on the outside, I felt an emptiness in my soul – what was the point of it all?

I was invited to attend a short series of talks on John’s Gospel, which led me to realise that this distant God was in fact my loving ruler and creator. I had been living my life in sin by rejecting his authority and would one day face the judgement and death I rightfully deserved. But God, in his rich mercy and grace, provided me with a solution – Jesus Christ, who died in my place!

My world was instantly turned upside down – now that I had a ruler to give account to meant that EVERYTHING in life had purpose and I wanted to reorient my desires and ambitions to live my life for Jesus. In John 6:35 Jesus said, “I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst”. I finally found the true meaning of life in Jesus Christ himself!

However, we aren’t promised a bed of roses as a Christian. In fact, since turning to trust in Jesus I have experienced heartaches, health issues, career struggles, anxiety, loss and grief. I don’t know what God’s plans are for me, but I can take heart that Jesus is with me in my sufferings. And what’s even more amazing is that his death and resurrection allow me to eagerly look forward with CERTAIN HOPE to the new creation – where God will wipe away all tears, where there will be no more pain, death and suffering (Revelation 21).

Jesus doesn’t just offer comfort in times of life’s challenges and death; If we place our trust in him, he promises that we too will rise to eternal life with him and shall be reunited with those who also share in this trust.

To my family and friends, I pray that you too will investigate the claims of Jesus and experience a personal relationship with Him as your Lord and saviour.

**Rolin’s testimony**

My story is one of God's unwavering authority and boundless power in my life.

Growing up, I had a lot of questions and doubts about my belief as I had Christian friends but my family were not Christians. I wondered if I truly believed, or if I was just going along with my friends.

For years, I relied solely on my own strength and effort, convinced that I could navigate life's challenges independently. But as I faced adversity that exceeded my abilities, I began to recognise the limits of human control.

It was during these moments of vulnerability that God revealed Himself to me as the ultimate authority and the source of unlimited power.

Through His Word, I discovered countless instances where His sovereignty was displayed in the lives of people who believe in him throughout history. As I read the Bible, I found that its teachings resonated with me in a profound way.

I began to see the unity and consistency of the message throughout the Scriptures, and I was particularly drawn to the message of God's love, grace, and sovereignty through Jesus Christ. In my weakness, I found His strength. In my uncertainty, I found His unshakable truth.

As I surrendered my desire for control and embraced His authority, my life began to transform. Fear gave way to faith, worry surrendered to peace, and doubt was replaced by unwavering confidence in His plans. God's authority is not a constraint, but a freedom – freedom from the burdens of self-reliance and the peace that comes from trusting in the One who holds the universe in His hands.

Today, I take this step of baptism as a declaration of my faith in Christ and all he has done for me, and my surrender to His authority over my life. Baptism is a symbol of the cleansing and renewal Christ offers and I am entering these waters with a heart full of gratitude for the God who is in control of all things, and I am committed to following Him wholeheartedly.