



Dear Friends

When I first took on the ministry at our church, there were three main objectives deeply rooted in my heart.

The first was to have a church building that was open to our community every day.

The second was to spread the Gospel to as many people as possible by growing our congregation and showing Oakham that we, as a church family, are very much alive, and that God is working through us as a family.

My third aim was a practical but urgent task: to work on our physical buildings to stop them from crumbling in on us.

Today, I want to say a massive, heartfelt thank you to everyone who is helping to make this vision a reality. While we certainly aren't 'there' yet, (and in truth, we will never fully arrive this side of heaven), we are moving forward at an amazing, encouraging rate. It is an absolute joy to watch this momentum build!

As you get to know me, you will quickly understand that I find it difficult to slow down my brain and active nature!

My wife now has the job of grounding me and pacing my ideas, and she does an amazing job of it. You can only imagine how long this letter would be if she hadn't edited it first! [Editor's note: you'll be please to know its only 50% of its original length!!]

But the truth is, because the first two objectives of community outreach and congregation growth are doing so incredibly well, I am starting to struggle to keep up with the third one.

Between the lack of time and the limits of my own energy, the building fabric is falling behind. Please do not misunderstand me: this is not a complaint. What a lovely position for a church to find itself in, where the life and growth of the church family are outpacing the maintenance of the bricks and mortar.

We are blessed to be situated right in the middle of a busy High Street. It pleases me immensely to see people using our church walkway every day as a shortcut and then popping into the hall for a cuppa and a chat, sometimes even walking into the worship area to sit and pray in peace.

We have launched a variety of cafés (for details see Church Diary) to encourage this. But to keep up this wonderful pace, we urgently need more volunteers to join the team. As Jesus famously reminded His disciples in Matthew 9:37-38: *'The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.'*

We do not serve or do good works to earn our way into heaven.

Rather, as the Apostle Paul writes in Ephesians 2:8-10, we are saved by grace through faith, but we are *'created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.'*

We serve simply because we are so overflowing with thankfulness for what God has already done for us and our mission is to spread the good news through our behaviour and interaction with others.

Actions truly speak louder than words. As 1 John 3:18 challenges us: *'Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth.'*

You do not need any special qualifications to help. We need people who will pray, along with people who will volunteer to just be at the cafés to chat, pour tea, and make visitors feel welcome.

You can join in any of the activities if you wish, but your presence alone will help make our church a warm, safe, and hospitable sanctuary.

Going forward, I hope to expand our impact in other areas too, activities such as baby and toddler clubs, youth clubs, and help for Oakham's homeless, immediately come to mind.

If you know anyone who can help launch these initiatives, or if you feel you could run or assist yourself, please speak up!

Equally, if you have been touched by God to reach people in other ways, please do not keep those ideas to yourself. Bring them forward.

Being a Christian is entirely about helping others and sharing God's grace in deeply practical ways.

A massive thank you again to all the existing volunteers and to everyone helping us advance forward. I am looking forward to what the next few months have in store for our church family.

Oh, and brace yourselves, we also need to start planning for Christmas soon!

With every blessing and deep gratitude,

Kev



Free Money to support the church

We have set up Oakham Congregational Church as a good cause on **easyfundraising.org.uk** who turn your everyday online shopping into free donations for good causes. Using their platform, over 8000 participating retailers send a small percentage of your spend to your chosen cause at no extra cost to you. It's easy! Sign up at their website or download the app and choose us as your good cause. Once signed up you are prompted while shopping online (at all your usual sites) if you'd like a donation to be made to your good cause. Once confirmed a small percentage of your purchase value is donated to us. Best of all -it costs you nothing!

[easyfundraising.org.uk](https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk)

Table Top Sale

The Table Top Sale held in August raised a total of £106.40. Thank you to everyone who took part.

Rutland Foodbank

Rice (microwave pouches),
tinned meat: ham and corned
beef, cereal bars, squash, UHT
fruit juice and noodle pots.

You can leave any donations
at the collection point at the
back of the church. Thank you

Women's Fellowship

Please come along to our
Women's Fellowship monthly
meeting starting on Tuesday
8th September at 2pm.
Contact Maria for more
details.

*If you have any news that
you'd like to share with the
church family through The
Messenger, please submit to
Kev by 20th of the month.*

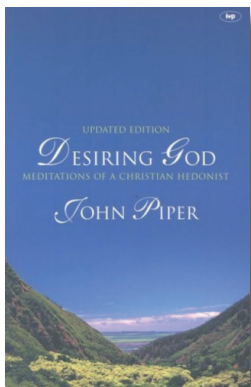


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Book Review

KEV WACKETT

***Desiring God: Meditations of a Christian Hedonist* by John Piper**



When John Piper, an American theologian and Baptist pastor, first introduced the concept of 'Christian Hedonism' in a seminar back in 1986, I was sitting in the audience listening. I have to tell you, it felt quite shocking at the time. Growing up in the Strict Baptist tradition, I learned a great deal of wonderful things, particularly the vital discipline of the Christian life, and a clear understanding of what we should and shouldn't do. Yet, alongside this was an unwritten air of 'stuffiness'.

It wasn't purposely there, but it simply became the environment. Even when I later moved on to a "freer" church, the underlying sentiment was remarkably similar:

a lingering, unspoken rule that "if you are enjoying it, then it's not your calling."

Thankfully, I know now that this is not how God operates, but it took sitting in that seminar and before diving into Piper's book to shake off this old thought pattern. It helped reshape my view of ministry and my own walk with Christ.

Recently I read it once again, and it struck me just how deeply relevant it still is. At its heart, it addresses that exact struggle: the feeling that serving God must be a cold, stoic obligation. Piper flips that misconception entirely on its head with his most famous line: *'God is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in him.'*

He argues that our innate human desire for happiness and joy isn't a sin to be suppressed. Instead, it is a tool designed to lead us straight to God. True worship happens when we stop trying to serve God out of sheer duty and start finding our ultimate pleasure, satisfaction, and delight in Him alone.

Piper's intense, passionate preaching style and his absolute conviction that God is completely sovereign over everything, really stands out.

While the book starts with some theological heavy lifting, the second half gets incredibly practical. Piper takes this idea of 'holy joy' and applies it directly to our lives, showing how it transforms our prayer, our corporate worship, our marriages, how we handle money, and even how we navigate deep suffering.

Piper's academic tone can be quite dense at times, and his intense focus on emotional satisfaction can feel heavy for those walking through dry spiritual seasons. But if you read it slowly and thoughtfully, it has the power to strip away the weight of legalism and replace it with a vibrant, joyful pursuit of the Divine.

There are four copies in our church library to borrow. Please see Sebastian to sign them out and back in. And, if you feel inspired to run a study group on this book, let's talk about how we can make that happen!

This Month's Short Bible Study

ALAN TAYLOR

To stimulate and encourage, I have set out a short study to help explain fundamental Christian convictions.

The Apostle Peter, in his letters to 1st century Christian believers (now part of the New Testament) wrote: *So I will always remind you of these things, even though you know them and are firmly established in the truth you now have. I think it is right to refresh your memory... And I will make every effort to see that after my departure you will always be able to remember these things.*

In the 20th century John Stott wrote in *The Contemporary Christian*: *"In response to this common feeling that Christianity is hopelessly out of date, we need to re-state our fundamental Christian conviction that God continues to speak through what he has spoken. His Word is not a prehistoric fossil, to be exhibited under glass, but a living message for the contemporary world. It belongs to the market place, not the museum.*

"For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile. For in the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed—a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: "The righteous will live by faith." [Romans 1:16, 17]

The English word 'reveal' comes from the Latin word *revelo*, which means 'unveil' or 'uncover'. J.I.Packer puts it like this: "It is a picture-word ...and the picture is of God unveiling – God showing us things which were previously hidden from us. God bringing into the open things which before were out of sight...That is what revelation means."⁷

Now this whole subject is a huge problem to people who are stuck in unbelief over the claims of Christianity. Their problem is that they see the world as a closed system into which there could be no possible intervention by God or anything else. Someone has said that 'Secularism's creed is - above us, only sky.' And yet there is a widespread interest in and curiosity about the supernatural and 'spirituality' which exclude God as he has revealed himself. It is really a denial of anything divinely supernatural. But if God really is all that he says he is then why shouldn't he choose – out of love and mercy – to reveal himself to mankind. So, do we want to know God more and more? Then look at what he has revealed. The Bible is the window through which we may look to see this, and Jesus Christ is at the centre of it all, the Word made flesh. "For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of God's glory displayed in the face of Christ." [2 Corinthians 4:6] God meets us in Jesus Christ, and shows us our need of him.

⁷ J I Packer, *God's Words*, p18, IVP, 1981

Hear the Rolling Thunder

BARBARA BYRNE

PHOTO: JANE RICHARDSON

*O Lord my God, when I in awesome wonder
Consider all the works thy hand has made.
I see the stars, I hear the rolling thunder -
Thy power throughout the universe displayed.
Then sings my soul my Saviour God to thee - How great thou art*

The origins of this hymn trace back to 1885 when Swedish poet Carl Bromberg penned the poem 'O Great God' (translation). Whilst walking home from church near Kronobach, Sweden he watched as an awe-inspiring, violent storm rolled in over the bay, only to be followed by a calm and gentle beauty.

Overwhelmed by the scene he was reminded of the passage from Job 37:5-6 - 'God's voice thunders in marvellous ways, he does great things beyond our understanding - He says to the snow "fall on the earth", and to the rain shower "be a mighty downpour."' (NIV)

His poem eventually became the hymn we know and love, to the tune of an old Swedish folk melody. British missionary Stuart Hine is credited with the English version we sing, adding extra verses.

Church Flowers

If anyone has a special date, anniversary or memory and would like to mark it by bringing a posy or bunch of fresh (not artificial please) flowers to beautify our church for any Sunday morning service, please feel free to do so. Vases of water, and windowsill space will be available 15 minutes before the service for you to display your flowers (and place a card next to it, should you wish).

Just a Moment

Many folk will remember me as 'Joan the Cake lady' as I baked and decorated cakes for about 40 years.

It all began back in the late 1970's when I was in my thirties and my youngsters attended Brooke Hill Primary School. One day I found myself in tears after a incident involving one of my children.

A neighbour came to my rescue and invited me over to her house later that day to watch her ice a cake.

As this was very kind of her I accepted her invitation. If I'm honest I wasn't that interested in cake decorating, in fact, to be even more honest, I couldn't think of anything more boring, but at least it would take my mind off the problem!

So later I popped across the road to see this neighbour, but within just a few minutes I was mesmerised as over the next two hours she slowly transformed a simple Victoria Sandwich into a beautiful woven basket of flowers.

As she went to the cupboard to bring out some yellow sugar paste roses complete with leaves that she had made earlier, I probably had my mouth open with wonder and awe as I witnessed a small miracle taking shape.

My neighbour had started me on a 40 year long hobby that would change my life, icing cakes for birthdays, christenings and weddings.

I was invited to give demonstrations at WI and other ladies groups and even tutored at evening classes at our local Vale of Catmose College. I also travelled to the South Coast on a few occasions to learn more and improve my own techniques.

Wow, all this from just a chance meeting with a dear neighbour!

I'm sure you know where this is going...

We have all been given the opportunity to transform our lives through Jesus Christ. The only difference here is that by accepting Him as our personal Saviour and inviting him into our lives we can be assured of life everlasting, when all these wordly things have passed.

'Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, behold, the new has come.' 2 Corinthians 5:17

Contemplative Thoughts on a Yorkshire Moor

You've made for me a sanctuary,
A place where I can go;
A place where I can worship you
In truth and openness.
It is for me a bar-less cell,
A place where I can say
The deeds that for confession call-
For you to take away.

You've made for me a tumbling stream
Beside which I walk,
A stream whose peace my soul unwinds
And calms my inner thoughts.
It is for me a tranquil spot
Away from life's demands,
Where I can with untroubled hush
Feel ease as joy expands.

You've made for me a moorland crag,
A height that I must climb
To reach the place to make my tryst
And leave with you 'longside.
It is for me an altar stone
On which to place my life
And offer you my way ahead=
A daily sacrifice.

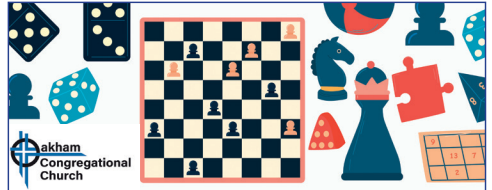
You've made for me within my heart
A place where I am 'me',
A secret and a holy spot
Of which I hold the key
It is my hid' way from the world,
A sanctuary of rest;
A place where I can be with you
Alone in quietness.



MONDAYS
10am-2pm

Learn crochet with Karen
Bring along your own wool projects
Meet, craft and relax

Any unwanted yarn donations gratefully received



TUESDAYS 10am-2pm

BOARD GAMES CAFÉ

Come & join in or just watch



DONATIONS WELCOME
THANK YOU



COFFEE MORNING
WEDNESDAYS 10am-noon



12 noon-2pm

16th September

14th October

11th November

16th December



**DROP IN FOR LUNCH
AND A CHAT
12 noon-2pm**

Kindly
supported by
TESCO
Proud to be
supporting
our local
community

**2nd, 9th, 23rd
& 30th September**



BIBLE QUESTION TIME

All Welcome



Looking at faith together- asking hard questions

**10th & 24th September
8th & 22nd October**

**1-3pm in the Church
with refreshments**

*'Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and
ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened
unto you:' Matthew 7:7*



All Welcome
**Thursday Lunchtime
BIBLE STUDY**



**3rd & 17th September
1st, 15th & 29th October**

**at 1pm in the Church Hall
with refreshments**

*'Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and
ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened
unto you:' Matthew 7:7*



Everyone Welcome

**FRIDAYS 4-7pm
in the Church Hall**

**Free & Fun Activity
Tuck Shop**



Church Diary Dates



Sunday Services	11am Service	5pm Prayer Meeting
6th September Communion	Kevan Wackett	Kevan Wackett
13th September	Canon Vyv Wainwright	Maria Malic
20th September Harvest Festival with tea afterwards	Rev Dr Janet Wootton	NOT ON
27th September	David Coxhead	Kevan Wackett

Church Hall

* in vestry

Date	What's On	Time	Tues 15th	Board Games Café	10-2
Tues 1st	Board Games Café	10-2	Wed 16th	Coffee Morning	10-12
				Community Lunches	12-2
Wed 2nd	Coffee Morning	10-12	Thurs 17th	Crafty Café	10-2
	Tear 'n' Share	12-2		Bible Study*	1-2.30
Thurs 3rd	Crafty Café	10-2	Fri 19th	Just Be Café	10-2
	Bible Study*	1-2.30		Table Tennis Club	4-7
Fri 4th	Just Be Café	10-2	Mon 21st	Wool Craft Café	10-2
	Table Tennis Club	NOT ON	Tues 22nd	Board Games Café	10-2
Mon 7th	Wool Craft Café	10-2	Wed 23rd	Coffee Morning	10-12
Tues 8th	Board Games Café	10-2		Tear 'n' Share	12-2
	Women's Fellowship	2-3	Thurs 24th	Crafty Café	10-2
Wed 9th	Coffee Morning	10-12		Bible Question Time*	1-2.30
	Tear 'n' Share	12-2	Fri 25th	Just Be Café	10-2
Thurs 10th	Crafty Café	10-2		Table Tennis Club	4-7
	Bible Question Time*	NOT ON	Mon 28th	Wool Craft Café	10-2
Fri 11th	Just Be Café	10-2	Tues 29th	Board Games Café	10-2
	Table Tennis Club	NOT ON	Wed 30th	Coffee Morning	10-12
Mon 14th	Wool Craft Cafe	10-2		Tear 'n' Share	12-2