

Bible In The Park



Greenhead Park, 1:30pm
on Sunday 21st June

Organised by Waverley URC
(United Reformed Church)
Vision for Life group.

User's Guide

The idea is that you visit a number of points in Greenhead Park. At each place, there is a Bible passage to read and reflect on. We start at about 1:30pm at the lower park gates (near point I on the map).

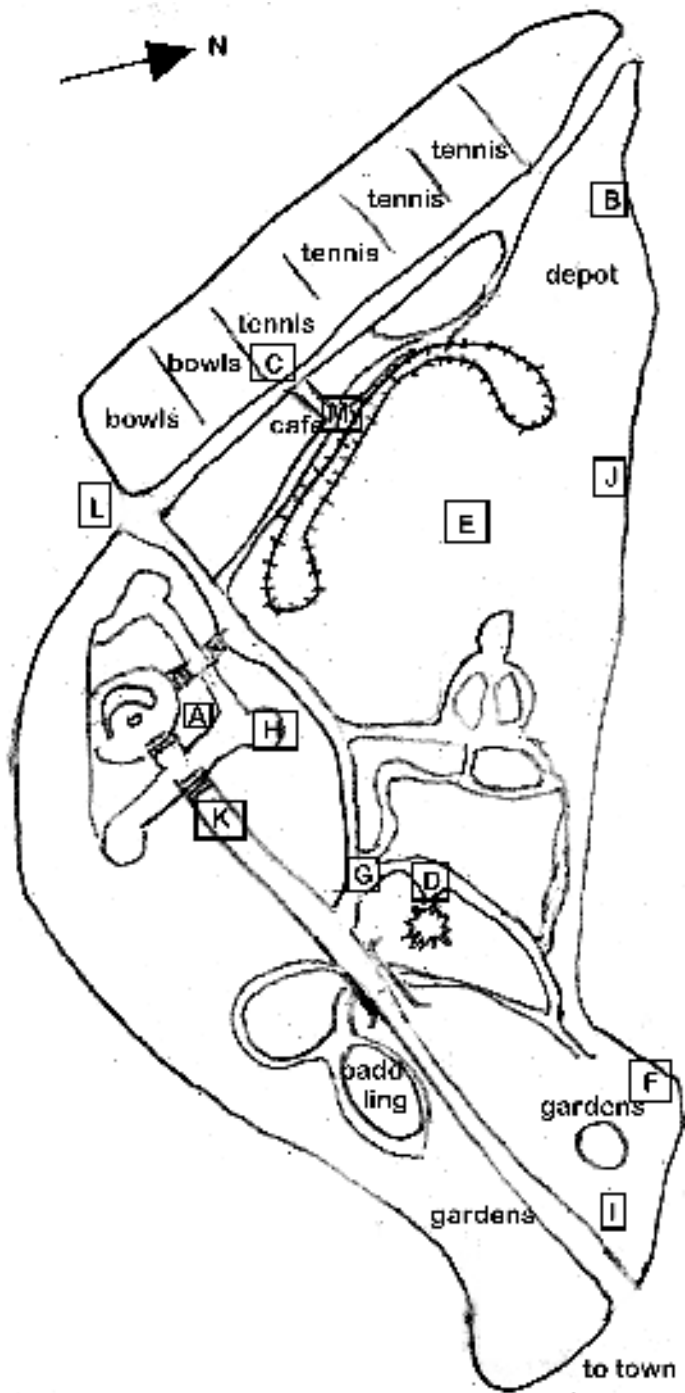
This booklet is laid out with the suggested sequence of visits, starting at the lower park gate, although of course you are free to visit in any order, or to follow the same order but begin at another point in the cycle. After the visits, at about 3pm, we go to Waverley House for tea and to talk about what we have discovered. If the weather is really nice we may stay on in the park for refreshments, if that is what people want.

This material can also be used by people visiting these points on a separate occasion. Or you can reflect on these passages without even visiting the park.

Here are some questions to talk about when people re-assemble;-

- *What did you feel like at these places?*
- *What did you learn?*
- *What other parts of the Bible would you have used, and why?*
- *Are there other places that (for you) have a strong connection with the Bible?*

There is a sketched map opposite which may help.



An end to war

The place: the Boer War memorial near the bottom entrance, point I

Bible background:

Dream the dream! Note also that this connects to Emley Moor ('raised above the hills')

The Bible: Isaiah 2:2-4

In days to come

the mountain of the Lord's house
shall be established as the highest of the mountains,
and shall be raised above the hills;
all the nations shall stream to it.

Many peoples shall come and say,
'Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord,
to the house of the God of Jacob;
that he may teach us his ways
and that we may walk in his
paths.'

For out of Zion shall go forth
instruction,

and the word of the Lord from
Jerusalem.

He shall judge between the nations,
and shall arbitrate for many
peoples;

they shall beat their swords into
ploughshares,

and their spears into pruning-
hooks;

nation shall not lift up sword against
nation,

neither shall they learn war any
more.



The fortress

***The place: looking towards Castle Hill, point F
(point E is also possible)***

The banks of an ancient hill fort are still visible when you go to Castle Hill

Bible background:

The writer is beleaguered, but trusts God for protection.

Bible: Psalm 62:1-7

For God alone my soul waits in silence;
from him comes my salvation.
He alone is my rock and my salvation,
my fortress; I shall never be shaken.

How long will you assail a person,
will you batter your victim, all of you,
as you would a leaning wall, a tottering fence?
Their only plan is to bring down a person of
prominence.
They take pleasure in falsehood;
they bless with their mouths,
but inwardly they curse.

For God alone my soul waits in silence,
for my hope is from him.
He alone is my rock and my salvation,
my fortress; I shall not be shaken.
On God rests my deliverance and my honour;
my mighty rock, my refuge is in God.

Sickness and health

***The place: Looking towards
Huddersfield Royal Infirmary, point J***

Bible background:

Jeremiah hears the Lord mourning over the health of his people. The health of society is more than their physical health, it is also how well people live with one another.

The Bible:Jeremiah 8.18-22

My joy is gone, grief is upon me,
my heart is sick.

Hark, the cry of my poor people
from far and wide in the land:

‘Is the Lord not in Zion?

Is her King not in her?’

(‘Why have they provoked me to anger with their
images,

with their foreign idols?’)

‘The harvest is past, the summer is ended,
and we are not saved.’

For the hurt of my poor people I am hurt,
I mourn, and dismay has taken hold of me.

Is there no balm in Gilead?

Is there no physician there?

Why then has the health of my poor people
not been restored?

Work

The place: somewhere with a view of the mill on New Hey Road or of the hills flanking the Upper Colne Valley, point J in either case

Bible background:

These are words directed at the early Christian community in Thessalonika. People need to make a contribution. And work is honourable. But what if people are denied the chance to work?

The Bible: 2 Thessalonians 3:6-15

Now we command you, beloved, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, to keep away from believers who are living in idleness and not according to the tradition that they received from us. For you yourselves know how you ought to imitate us; we were not idle when we were with you, and we did not eat anyone's bread without paying for it; but with toil and labour we worked night and day, so that we might not burden any of you. This was not because we do not have that right, but in order to give you an example to imitate. For even when we were with you, we gave you this command: Anyone unwilling to work should not eat. For we hear that some of you are living in idleness, mere busybodies, not doing any work. Now such persons we command and exhort in the Lord Jesus Christ to do their work quietly and to earn their own living. Brothers and sisters, do not be weary in doing what is right.

The Hills

The place: a view of the Pennines, point B

If you stand near the top entrance, the other end of the putting green, and the weather is reasonable, you can see the Pennines in the distance.

Bible background:

A Psalm for reassurance in a time of need...

Bible: Psalm 121

I lift up my eyes—
from where will my help come?
My help comes from the Lord,
who made heaven and earth.

He will not let your foot be moved;
he who keeps you will not slumber.
He who keeps Israel
will neither slumber nor sleep.

The Lord is your keeper;
the Lord is your shade at your right hand.
The sun shall not strike you by day,
nor the moon by night.

The Lord will keep you from all evil;
he will keep your life.
The Lord will keep
your going out and your coming in
from this time on and for evermore.

Light of the world

The place: Looking towards Emley Moor TV mast, point M near the railway station, or possibly point H near the war memorial

Bible background:

Jesus is speaking to a crowd. Just as Emley Moor is visible for miles around, so our actions are visible also. At issue is not the visibility of our actions, but whether they are good or bad.

The Bible: Matthew 5:13-16

'You are the salt of the earth; but if salt has lost its taste, how can its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything, but is thrown out and trampled under foot.

'You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hidden. No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.



The Sabbath

The place: A place of relaxation, point C

Stand between the bowling greens and the tennis courts

Bible background:

This is an extract from the 'Ten Commandments'. We must take times of rest – it is an order.

The Bible: Deuteronomy 5:1-7,12-15

Moses convened all Israel, and said to them:

Hear, O Israel, the statutes and ordinances that I am addressing to you today; you shall learn them and observe them diligently. The Lord our God made a covenant with us at Horeb. Not with our ancestors did the Lord make this covenant, but with us, who are all of us here alive today. The Lord spoke with you face to face at the mountain, out of the fire. (At that time I was standing between the Lord and you to declare to you the words of the Lord; for you were afraid because of the fire and did not go up the mountain.) And he said:

I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery; you shall have no other gods before me....

...Observe the sabbath day and keep it holy, as the Lord



your God commanded you. For six days you shall labour and do all your work. But the seventh day is a sabbath to the Lord your God; you shall not do any work—you, or your son or your daughter, or your male or female slave, or your ox or your donkey, or any of your livestock, or the resident alien in your towns, so that your male and female slave may rest as well as you. Remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the Lord your God brought you out from there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm; therefore the Lord your God commanded you to keep the sabbath day.



The tragedy of war

The Place: War Memorial, point A

The main memorial at the highest point in the park.

Bible background:

King David's son, Absalom, is involved in a rebellion against David. The rebellion is put down by the king's loyal troops, and Absalom is dead. But David loves his son.

Bible: 2 Samuel 18:24 - 19:4

Now David was sitting between the two gates. The sentinel went up to the roof of the gate by the wall, and when he looked up, he saw a man running alone. The sentinel shouted and told the king. The king said, 'If he is alone, there are tidings in his mouth.' He kept coming, and drew near. Then the sentinel saw another man running; and the sentinel called to the gatekeeper and said, 'See, another man running alone!' The king said, 'He also is bringing tidings.' The sentinel said, 'I think the running of the first one is like the running of Ahimaaz son of Zadok.' The king said, 'He is a good man, and comes with good tidings.'

Then Ahimaaz cried out to the king, 'All is well!' He prostrated himself before the king with his face to the ground, and said, 'Blessed be the Lord your God, who has delivered up the men who raised their hand against my lord the king.' The king said, 'Is it well with the young man Absalom?' Ahimaaz answered, 'When Joab sent your servant, I saw a great tumult, but I do not know what it was.' The king said, 'Turn aside, and stand here.' So he turned aside, and stood still.

Then the Cushite came; and the Cushite said, 'Good tidings for my lord the king! For the Lord has vindicated you this day, delivering you from the power

of all who rose up against you.' The king said to the Cushite, 'Is it well with the young man Absalom?' The Cushite answered, 'May the enemies of my lord the king, and all who rise up to do you harm, be like that young man.'

The king was deeply moved, and went up to the chamber over the gate, and wept; and as he went, he said, 'O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! Would that I had died instead of you, O Absalom, my son, my son!'

It was told Joab, 'The king is weeping and mourning for Absalom.' So the victory that day was turned into mourning for all the troops; for the troops heard that day, 'The king is grieving for his son.' The troops stole into the city that day as soldiers steal in who are ashamed when they flee in battle. The king covered his face, and the king cried with a loud voice, 'O my son Absalom, O Absalom, my son, my son!'



Prepare the way

The place: near the top of the main straight path from the war memorial, looking down towards the gate, point K

Bible background:

This is the beginning of 'second Isaiah', the prophet of the homecoming from exile. A lot of his words, especially the Servant Songs are taken by Christians to be about Jesus. This passage is one which puts music in my head, either Handel or Lloyd-Webber.

The Bible: Isaiah 40:1-8

Comfort, O comfort my people,
says your God.
Speak tenderly to Jerusalem,
and cry to her
that she has served her term,
that her penalty is paid,
that she has received from the Lord's hand
double for all her sins.

A voice cries out:

'In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord,
make straight in the desert a highway for our God.
Every valley shall be lifted up,
and every mountain and hill be made low;
the uneven ground shall become level,
and the rough places a plain.
Then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed,
and all people shall see it together,
for the mouth of the Lord has spoken.'

A voice says, 'Cry out!'
And I said, 'What shall I cry?'

All people are grass,
their constancy is like the flower of the field.
The grass withers, the flower fades,
when the breath of the Lord blows upon it;
surely the people are grass.
The grass withers, the flower fades;
but the word of our God will stand for ever.



Living water

The place: the drinking fountain, point G

Bible background:

Jesus has met this woman at a well. If you have a Bible with you, you may want to read the rest of the conversation, from John 4:20 onwards.

The Bible: John 4.9-19

The Samaritan woman said to him, 'How is it that you, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a woman of Samaria?' (Jews do not share things in common with Samaritans.)*

Jesus answered her, 'If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, "Give me a drink", you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water.'

The woman said to him, 'Sir, you have no bucket, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water? Are you greater than our ancestor Jacob, who gave us the well, and with his sons and his flocks drank from it?' Jesus said to her, 'Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life.'

The woman said to him, 'Sir, give me this water, so that I may never be thirsty or have to keep coming here to draw water.'



Rebuilding Jerusalem

The place: the bandstand, point D

Bible background:

Nehemiah was sad because Jerusalem was in ruins. He was serving King Artaxerxes of Persia, and the king asked him why he was so miserable. Nehemiah told him, and the king allowed him to go to Jerusalem, to rebuild it, with his blessing.

Nehemiah 2:11-20

So I came to Jerusalem and was there for three days. Then I got up during the night, I and a few men with me; I told no one what my God had put into my heart to do for Jerusalem. The only animal I took was the animal I rode. I went out by night by the Valley Gate past the Dragon's Spring and to the Dung Gate, and I inspected the walls of Jerusalem that had been broken down and its gates that had been destroyed by fire. Then I went on to the Fountain Gate and to the King's Pool; but there was no place for the animal I was riding to continue. So I went up by way of the valley by night and inspected the wall. Then I turned back and entered by the Valley Gate, and so returned. The officials did not know where I had gone or what I was doing; I had not yet told the Jews, the priests, the nobles, the officials, and the rest that were to do the work.



Then I said to them, 'You see the trouble we are in, how Jerusalem lies in ruins with its gates burnt. Come, let us rebuild the wall of Jerusalem, so that we may no longer suffer disgrace.' I told them that the hand of my

God had been gracious upon me, and also the words that the king had spoken to me. Then they said, 'Let us start building!' So they committed themselves to the common good. But when Sanballat the Horonite and Tobiah the Ammonite official, and Geshem the Arab heard of it, they mocked and ridiculed us, saying, 'What is this that you are doing? Are you rebelling against the king?' Then I replied to them, 'The God of heaven is the one who will give us success, and we his servants are going to start building; but you have no share or claim or historic right in Jerusalem.'



Making a joyful noise

The place: the bandstand ... again, point D

Bible background:

We see the reasons for the Hebrews to make a joyful noise: what reasons do we have?

Psalm 98

O sing to the Lord a new song,
for he has done marvellous things.

His right hand and his holy arm
have gained him victory.

The Lord has made known his victory;
he has revealed his vindication in the sight of the
nations.

He has remembered his steadfast love and faithfulness
to the house of Israel.

All the ends of the earth have seen
the victory of our God.

Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth;
break forth into joyous song and sing praises.

Sing praises to the Lord with the lyre,
with the lyre and the sound of melody.

With trumpets and the sound of the horn
make a joyful noise before the King, the Lord.

Let the sea roar, and all that fills it;
the world and those who live in it.

Let the floods clap their hands;
let the hills sing together for joy
at the presence of the Lord, for he is coming
to judge the earth.

He will judge the world with righteousness,
and the peoples with equity.

And finally...

The place: where you end up.

Look around you. Look to the distance if you can see it. Look upwards to the sky.

Bible background:

You will see why the last paragraph is rarely read in church. A Christian would not consider that someone with 'a perfect hatred' has no 'wicked way in me'. The Psalmist, like all of us, is a jumble of impulses and feelings, a work in progress. But God is to be relied on, always there wherever we go.

The Bible: Psalm 139

O Lord, you have searched me and known me.
You know when I sit down and when I rise up;
 you discern my thoughts from far away.
You search out my path and my lying down,
 and are acquainted with all my ways.
Even before a word is on my tongue,
 O Lord, you know it completely.
You hem me in, behind and before,
 and lay your hand upon me.
Such knowledge is too wonderful for me;
 it is so high that I cannot attain it.

Where can I go from your spirit?
 Or where can I flee from your presence?
If I ascend to heaven, you are there;
 if I make my bed in Sheol, you are there.
If I take the wings of the morning
 and settle at the farthest limits of the sea,
even there your hand shall lead me,
 and your right hand shall hold me fast.
If I say, 'Surely the darkness shall cover me,

and the light around me become night',
even the darkness is not dark to you;
the night is as bright as the day,
for darkness is as light to you.

For it was you who formed my inward parts;
you knit me together in my mother's womb.
I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.
Wonderful are your works;
that I know very well.

My frame was not hidden from you,
when I was being made in secret,
intricately woven in the depths of the earth.
Your eyes beheld my unformed substance.

In your book were written
all the days that were formed for me,
when none of them as yet existed.
How weighty to me are your thoughts, O God!
How vast is the sum of them!

I try to count them—they are more than the sand;
I come to the end—I am still with you.

O that you would kill the wicked, O God,
and that the bloodthirsty would depart from me—
those who speak of you maliciously,
and lift themselves up against you for evil!

Do I not hate those who hate you, O Lord?
And do I not loathe those who rise up against you?
I hate them with perfect hatred;
I count them my enemies.

Search me, O God, and know my heart;
test me and know my thoughts.
See if there is any wicked way in me,
and lead me in the way everlasting.

Notes...

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