



Forty Days of Summer 2025

**BIBLE STORIES
FOR GROWN-UPS**

Sunday 27 July - Sunday 31 August 2025

This is BIBLE STORIES FOR GROWN-UPS, a series that invites you to engage with scripture as it really is: a collection of human stories where God’s presence breaks through—in ways that challenge, comfort, and call us onward. The nine stories are about what it means to be seen, to speak, to act, and to risk something of yourself in doing so. In every human interaction, there’s a subtle but powerful dynamic at play. We carry a sense of face — our public self-image. We want to be seen as competent, loveable, respectable, independent. We want our dignity kept intact. This is not vanity — it’s a deep human need. And it’s fragile. There are two dimensions to this.

- POSITIVE FACE is the desire to be admired or accepted.
- NEGATIVE FACE is the desire to be respected and left unpressured.

And almost everything we do in relationship — our silence, our speech, our refusal, our kindness — is shaped by how we manage face, ours and others’. In the stories that follow, face is constantly at stake. People rise and fall in the eyes of others. These are not safe, polished people. They are grown-ups, like us, navigating complexity.

“When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became an adult, I put the ways of childhood behind me. For now we see only a reflection, as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.”

1 Corinthians 13:11–12

Let this summer be a time not just of learning these stories again, but of stepping into them — fully, visibly, and with faith. If we dare to look, we will come to see that when face is exposed, so grace is too.

Story One: Forty Days of Summer 2025

THE GIANT WHO FELL

Sunday 27 July - Wednesday 30 July



Storyteller: Andy Gandon

1 Samuel 17:1-11 and Luke 13:18-19

St Wulstans - 27 July
St Barnabas - 10 August
St Nicholas - 24 August

TAKE FIVE DEEP BREATHS. CHECK-IN WITH HOW YOU ARE FEELING – IN BODY, IN MIND, IN SPIRIT. TAKE FIVE MORE DEEP BREATHS AND ASK GOD TO ABIDE WITH YOU IN THIS MOMENT. NOW READ THE PASSAGE.

Verses from 1 Samuel 17

Now the Philistines gathered their armies for battle. They were gathered at Socoh, which belongs to Judah, and encamped between Socoh and Azekah. Saul and the Israelites gathered and encamped in the valley of Elah, and formed ranks against the Philistines. The Philistines stood on the mountain on one side, and Israel stood on the mountain on the other side, with a valley between them.

And there came out from the camp of the Philistines a champion named Goliath, of Gath, whose height was six cubits and a span. He had a helmet of bronze on his head, and he was armed with a coat of mail; the weight of the coat was five thousand shekels of bronze. He had greaves of bronze on his legs and a javelin of bronze slung

between his shoulders. The shaft of his spear was like a weaver's beam, and his spear's head weighed six hundred shekels of iron; and his shield-bearer went before him.

He stood and shouted to the ranks of Israel, "Why have you come out to draw up for battle? Am I not a Philistine, and are you not servants of Saul? Choose a man for yourselves, and let him come down to me. If he is able to fight with me and kill me, then we will be your servants; but if I prevail against him and kill him, then you shall be our servants and serve us." And the Philistine said, "Today I defy the ranks of Israel! Give me a man, that we may fight together." When Saul and all Israel heard these words of the Philistine, they were dismayed and greatly afraid.



You can read the whole story in 1 Samuel 17 and watch video resources by going to saintwulstans.online and looking for the post called **The Giant Who Fell**

One | You can read 1 Samuel 17 for the rest of the story. Do you remember the five smooth stones? If this were a film, what moment would you zoom in on before the first stone for the flies?

Two | Where do you find yourself in and where do you find God in this story?

Three | How might the mustard seed connect with David and Goliath for you?

Jesus said therefore, "What is the kingdom of God like? It is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in the garden; it grew and became a tree, and the birds of the air made nests in its branches."

Luke 13:18-19

Four | Reread the front page of this booklet for a reminder about how 'face' works. How does David risk 'face' — his own and Goliath's — by speaking so boldly in public?

Five | What strikes you differently in this story now that you're reading it as a grown-up?

Six | Try to express your key thought from today as a short phrase that you can carry with you into the rest of your day and week, for example, "look for the mustard seed". Turn to the back page.



May our Gracious God, who knows our pride and our fear, reshape our stories with the courage of Christ who stands with the small. Amen.

Story Two: Forty Days of Summer 2025

THE GIRL WHO KNEW

Thursday 31 July - Sunday 3 August



Storyteller: Rosie Moss

2 Kings 5:1-19a and Mark 1:40-45

St Nicholas - 3 August
St Wulstans - 10 August

Verses from 2 Kings 5

Naaman, commander of the army of the king of Aram, was a great man and in high favour with his master, because by him the Lord had given victory to Aram. The man, though a mighty

warrior, suffered from leprosy. Now the Arameans on one of their raids had taken a young girl captive from the land of Israel, and she served Naaman's wife. She said to her mistress, "If only my lord were with the prophet who is in

Samaria! He would cure him of his leprosy.”

So Naaman went in and told his lord just what the girl from the land of Israel had said. And the king of Aram said, “Go then, and I will send along a letter to the king of Israel.” He went, taking with him ten talents of silver, six thousand shekels of gold, and ten sets of garments. He brought the letter to the king of Israel, which read, “When this letter reaches you, know that I have sent to you my servant Naaman, that you may cure him of his leprosy.”

When the king of Israel read the letter, he tore his clothes and said, “Am I God, to give death or life, that this man sends word to me to cure a man of his leprosy? Just look and see how he is trying to pick a quarrel with me.” But when Elisha the man of God heard that the king of Israel had torn his clothes, he sent a message to the king, “Why have you torn your clothes? Let him come to me, that he may learn that there is a prophet in Israel.”

So Naaman came with his horses and chariots, and halted at the entrance of Elisha’s house. Elisha sent a messenger to him, saying, “Go, wash in the Jordan seven times, and your flesh shall be restored and you shall be clean.” But Naaman became angry and went away, saying, “I thought that for me he would surely come out, and stand and call on the name of the Lord his God, and would wave his hand over the spot, and cure the leprosy! Are not Abana and Pharpar, the rivers of Damascus,

better than all the waters of Israel? Could I not wash in them, and be clean?” He turned and went away in a rage.



But his servants approached and said to him, “Father, if the prophet had commanded you to do something difficult, would you not have done it? How much more, when all he said to you was, ‘Wash, and be clean?’” So he went down and immersed himself seven times in the Jordan, according to the word of the man of God; his flesh was restored like the flesh of a young boy, and he was clean.

Then he returned to the man of God, he and all his company; he came and stood before him and said, “Now I know that there is no God in all the earth except in Israel.”

You can watch
video resources
by going to
saintwulstans.online
and looking for the post called



The Girl Who Knew

TAKE FIVE DEEP BREATHS. CHECK-IN WITH HOW YOU ARE FEELING – IN BODY, IN MIND, IN SPIRIT. TAKE FIVE MORE DEEP BREATHS AND ASK GOD TO ABIDE WITH YOU IN THIS MOMENT. NOW PONDER THESE QUESTIONS.

One | Spend some time choosing a young girl that you know well, or used to know, and ‘cast’ her in the story as the unnamed slave girl.

Two | How many different boundaries are crossed in this story, literally or figuratively?

Three | Read this encounter from the opening chapter of Mark’s Gospel.

A leper came to him begging him, and kneeling he said to him, “If you choose, you can make me clean.” Moved with pity, Jesus stretched out his hand and touched him, and said to him, “I do choose. Be made clean!” Immediately the leprosy left him, and he was made clean. After sternly warning him he sent him away at once.

Mark 1:40–45

How is this encounter the similar and in what ways is it different to Naaman’s story?



Four | Reread the front page for a reminder about how ‘face’ works. Putting both stories together, who risked more ‘face’ — Naaman, the unnamed servant girl, the unnamed leper, or Jesus himself?

Five | Where do you find yourself in and where do you find God in these stories? How do you feel about the God you see in this story?

Six | Try to express your key thought from today as a short phrase that you can carry with you into the rest of your day and week, for example, “moved with pity”. Turn to the back page.



May our Gracious God, who knows our resistance and our need, reshape our stories with the mercy of Christ who welcomes the outsider. Amen.

Story Three: Forty Days of Summer 2025

THE CITY THAT SAW

Monday 4 August - Thursday 7 August



Storyteller: Paul Swann

Joshua 6:1–20 and Luke 19:1–10

sermon available
online at any time

You can read the whole story in Joshua 6 and watch Paul Swann’s video sermon by going to saintwulstans.online and looking for the post called **The City That Saw**



TAKE FIVE DEEP BREATHS. CHECK-IN WITH HOW YOU ARE FEELING – IN BODY, IN MIND, IN SPIRIT. TAKE FIVE MORE DEEP BREATHS AND ASK GOD TO ABIDE WITH YOU IN THIS MOMENT. NOW READ THE PASSAGE.



Verses from Joshua 6

Now Jericho was shut up inside and out because of the Israelites; no one came out and no one went in. The Lord said to Joshua, “See, I have handed Jericho over to you, along with its king and soldiers. You shall march around the city, all the warriors circling the city once. Thus you shall do for six days, with seven priests bearing seven trumpets of rams’ horns before the ark.

On the seventh day you shall march around the city seven times, the priests blowing the trumpets. When they make a long blast with the ram’s horn, as soon as you hear the sound of the trumpet, then all the people shall shout with a great shout; and the wall of the city will fall down flat, and all the people shall charge straight ahead.”

r e f l e c t i o n s

One | You can read the whole story in [Joshua 6](#). What would Jericho sound like — before, during, and after the walls fell?

Two | Think through the story afresh as if it was in today’s news headlines.

Three | Zaccheus was an inhabitant of Jericho centuries later in the days of Jesus.

Jesus entered Jericho and was passing through it. A man was there named Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax collector and was rich. He was trying to see who Jesus was, but on account of the crowd he could not, because he was short in stature. So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore tree to see him, because he was going to pass that way. When Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said to him, “Zacchaeus, hurry and come down; for I must stay at your house today.”

So he hurried down and was happy to welcome him. Then Jesus said to him, “Today salvation has come to this house, because he too is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek out and to save the lost.”

Luke 19:1-10

Compare Jesus and Joshua, and Rahab (who helped Joshua’s spies) and Zaccheus. How do you feel about these contrasting stories?

Four | In Joshua, Jericho is seen from the outside — its walls high, its people hidden. In Luke, we are drawn inside the city to see one man exposed in a tree. What do these two Jericho stories reveal about how face is kept, risked, or revealed?

Five | How are your walls today?

Six | Try to express your key thought from today as a short phrase that you can carry with you into the rest of your day and week, for example, “blow the trumpet”. Turn to the back page.



May our
Gracious
God, who



knows our defences
and our distrust, reshape our
stories with the trust of Christ who
brings down every barrier. Amen.

Story Four: Forty Days of Summer 2025

THE WOMAN WHO LOOKED BOTH WAYS

Friday 8 August - Monday 11 August



Storyteller: Julie Berrow

Genesis 19:12-29 and Luke 17:32-33

St Barnabas - 17 August

TAKE FIVE DEEP BREATHS. CHECK-IN WITH HOW YOU ARE FEELING – IN BODY, IN MIND, IN SPIRIT. TAKE FIVE MORE DEEP BREATHS AND ASK GOD TO ABIDE WITH YOU IN THIS MOMENT. NOW READ THE PASSAGE.

Verses from Genesis 19

When morning dawned, the angels urged Lot, saying, “Get up, take your wife and your two daughters who are here, or else you will be consumed in the punishment of the city.”

But he lingered; so the men seized him and his wife and his two daughters by the hand, the Lord being merciful to him, and they brought him out and left him outside the city. When they had brought them outside, they said, “Flee for your life; do not look back or stop anywhere in the plain; flee to the hills, or else you will be consumed.”

And Lot said to them, “Oh, no, my lords; your servant has found favour

with you, and you have shown me great kindness in saving my life. But I cannot flee to the hills, for fear the disaster will overtake me and I die. Look, that city is near enough to flee to, and it is a little one. Let me escape there—is it not a little one?—and my life will be saved!”

He said to him, “Very well, I grant you this favour too, and will not overthrow the city of which you have spoken. Hurry, escape there, for I can do nothing until you arrive there.”

Then the Lord rained on Sodom and Gomorrah sulphur and fire from the Lord out of heaven; and he overthrew those cities, and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and what

grew on the ground. But Lot's wife, behind him, looked back, and she became a pillar of salt.

You can watch video resources by going to saintwulstans.online and looking for the post called



The Woman Who Looked Both Ways

One | Spend some time picturing this family as refugees caught up in a natural disaster.

Two | What strikes you differently in this story now that you're reading it as a grown-up?

Three | Jesus speaks of this situation:

Remember Lot's wife! Whoever tries to keep their life will lose it, and whoever loses their life will preserve it.

Luke 17:32-33

Do Jesus words stir any sense in you of hesitation, risk, or regret?

Four | Reread the front page for a reminder about how 'face' works. Lot's wife turns her face back, even as the story urges only forward motion. Is she unable to manage to face the demands of the moment, and could looking back also be a kind of courage — a refusal to lose face by forgetting what mattered?

Five | How do you feel about the God you see in this story?

Six | Try to express your key thought from today as a short phrase that you can carry with you into the rest of your day and week, for example, "Remember Lot's wife". Turn to the back page.



May our Gracious God, who knows our hesitation and regret, reshape our stories with the hope of Christ who calls us forward. Amen.



Story Five: Forty Days of Summer 2025

THE TEETH THAT DIDN'T BITE

Tuesday 12 August - Friday 15 August



Storyteller: Chris Walker

Daniel 6:1-22 and Matthew 6:33-7:5

St Barnabas - 24 August

You can watch video resources by going to saintwulstans.online and looking for the post called **The Teeth That Didn't Bite**



TAKE FIVE DEEP BREATHS. CHECK-IN WITH HOW YOU ARE FEELING – IN BODY, IN MIND, IN SPIRIT. TAKE FIVE MORE DEEP BREATHS AND ASK GOD TO ABIDE WITH YOU IN THIS MOMENT. NOW READ THE PASSAGE.



Verses from Daniel 6

It pleased Darius to appoint a hundred and twenty satraps to rule throughout the kingdom, with three administrators over them, one of whom was Daniel. The satraps were made accountable to them so that the king might not suffer loss. Now Daniel so distinguished himself among the administrators and the satraps by his exceptional qualities that the king planned to set him over the whole kingdom.

At this, the administrators and the satraps tried to find grounds for charges against Daniel in his conduct of government affairs, but they were unable to do so. They could find no corruption in him, because he was trustworthy and neither corrupt nor negligent.

Finally these men said, "We will never find any basis for charges against this man Daniel unless it has something to do with the law of his God." So these administrators and satraps went as a group to the king and said: "May King Darius live forever! The royal administrators, prefects, satraps, advisers and governors have all agreed that the king should issue an edict and enforce the decree that anyone who prays to any god or human being during the next thirty days, except to you, Your Majesty, shall be thrown into the lions' den. Now, Your Majesty, issue the

decree and put it in writing so that it cannot be altered—in accordance with the law of the Medes and Persians, which cannot be repealed." So King Darius put the decree in writing.

Now when Daniel learned that the decree had been published, he went home to his upstairs room where the windows opened towards Jerusalem. Three times a day he got down on his knees and prayed, giving thanks to his God, just as he had done before.

Then these men went as a group and found Daniel praying and asking God for help. So they went to the king and spoke to him about his royal decree: "Did you not publish a decree that during the next thirty days anyone who prays to any god or human being except to you, Your Majesty, would be thrown into the lions' den?"

The king answered, "The decree stands—in accordance with the law of the Medes and Persians, which cannot be repealed."

Then they said to the king, "Daniel, who is one of the exiles from Judah, pays no attention to you, Your Majesty, or to the decree you put in writing. He still prays three times a day." When the king heard this, he was greatly distressed; he was determined to rescue Daniel and made every effort until sundown to save him. And then the king gave the order, and they brought

Daniel and threw him into the lions' den. The king said to Daniel, "May your God, whom you serve continually, rescue you!"

A stone was brought and placed over the mouth of the den, and the king sealed it with his own signet ring and with the rings of his nobles, so that Daniel's situation might not be changed. Then the king returned to his palace and spent the night without eating and without any entertainment being brought to him. And he could not sleep. At the first light of dawn, the king got up and hurried to the lions' den. When he came near the den, he called to Daniel in an anguished voice, "Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you serve continually, been able to rescue you from the lions?"

Daniel answered, "May the king live forever! My God sent his angel, and he shut the mouths of the lions. They have not hurt me, because I was found innocent in his sight. Nor have I ever done any wrong before you, Your Majesty."

r e f l e c t i o n s

One | Describe in your imagination the conspirators going as group and finding Daniel at prayer. Think about all the body language you can see.

Two | The lions' teeth might not have bitten Daniel, but there were plenty of other teeth that did. Describe the pressures that he was living with.

Three | In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus says:



But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

Do not judge, or you too will be judged. For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.

Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, "Let me take the speck out of your eye," when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye.

Matthew 6:33–7:5

How might these words shape the way we understand Daniel's actions — and the motivations of those who accused him?

Four | Reread the front page for a reminder about how 'face' works. How do Daniel's quiet prayers, the satraps' manipulative plotting, and Darius's reluctant decree each reveal different pressures to save face? Who risks face — and who protects it — and at what cost?

Five | How might our own attempts to save face — to appear right, respected, or in control — lead us to judge or manipulate others?

What would it mean to risk face instead of managing it?

Six | Try to express your key thought from today as a short phrase that you can carry with

you into the rest of your day and week, for example, “into your hands O Lord”. Turn to the back page.



May our Gracious God, who knows our pressure to conform and our longing to stay true, reshape our stories with the faithfulness of Christ who stood firm in love. Amen.

Story Six: Forty Days of Summer 2025

THE NAME THAT SPOKE ITSELF

Saturday 16 August - Tuesday 19 August



Storyteller: Sarah Northall

Exodus 33:18-34:8 and John 12:20-30

St Barnabas - 3 August

St Nicholas - 10 August

St Wulstans - 17 August

TAKE FIVE DEEP BREATHS. CHECK-IN WITH HOW YOU ARE FEELING – IN BODY, IN MIND, IN SPIRIT. TAKE FIVE MORE DEEP BREATHS AND ASK GOD TO ABIDE WITH YOU IN THIS MOMENT. NOW READ THE PASSAGE.

Verses from Exodus 33

Moses said, “Show me your glory, I pray.” And he said, “I will make all my goodness pass before you, and will proclaim before you the name, ‘The Lord’; and I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy. But,” he said, “you cannot see my face; for no one shall see me and live.” And the Lord continued, “See, there is a place by me where you shall stand on the rock; and while my glory passes by I will put you

in a cleft of the rock, and I will cover you with my hand until I have passed by; then I will take away my hand, and you shall see my back; but my face shall not be seen.”

The Lord said to Moses, “Cut two tablets of stone like the former ones, and I will write on the tablets the words that were on the former tablets, which you broke. Be ready in the morning, and come up in the morning to Mount Sinai and present yourself there to me, on the top of the mountain. No one shall come

up with you, and do not let anyone be seen throughout all the mountain; and do not let flocks or herds graze in front of that mountain.”

So Moses cut two tablets of stone like the former ones; and he rose early in the morning and went up on Mount Sinai, as the Lord had commanded him, and took in his hand the two tablets of stone.

The Lord descended in the cloud and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name, “The Lord.” The Lord passed before him, and proclaimed, “The Lord, the Lord, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, keeping steadfast love for the thousandth generation, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, yet by no means clearing the guilty, but visiting the iniquity of the parents upon the children and the children’s children, to the third and the fourth generation.” And Moses quickly bowed his head towards the earth, and worshipped.

You can watch video resources by going to saintwulstans.online and looking for the post called **The Name That Spoke Itself**



One | Imagine you had the unashamed freedom of a small child’s creativity.

What art materials and colours would you use to represent God passing by.



Two | What is Moses asking for, and how does God reply?

Three | Reflect on this experience in the Gospels in the light of Moses’ story:

Now there were some Greeks among those who went up to worship at the festival. They came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, with a request. “Sir,” they said, “we would like to see Jesus.” Philip went to tell Andrew; Andrew and Philip in turn told Jesus.

Jesus replied, “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Very truly I tell you, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds. Anyone who loves their life will lose it, while anyone who hates their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am, my servant also will be. My Father will honour the one who serves me.

Now my soul is troubled, and what shall I say? ‘Father, save me from this hour’? No, it was for this very reason I came to this hour. Father, glorify your name!” Then a voice came from heaven, “I have glorified it, and will glorify it again.” The crowd that was there and heard it said it had thundered; others said an angel had

spoken to him. Jesus said, “This voice was for your benefit, not mine.”

John 12:20-30

Four | Have you ever experienced something that felt full of God, even though others didn’t seem to notice it—or realised later that you’d missed something that turned out to be full of God for someone else?

Five | Reread the front page for a reminder about how ‘face’ works. If

‘face’ is all about how we present ourselves to others, what might it mean that God hides

His face from Moses—but still speaks, passes by, and covers him with a hand?

Six | Try to express your key thought from today as a short phrase that you can carry with you into the rest of your day and week, for example, “some said it thundered”. Turn to the back page.



May our Gracious God, who knows our impatience and our longing to see clearly, reshape our stories with the presence of Christ who reveals the unseen God. Amen.

Story Seven: Forty Days of Summer 2025

THE PROPHET THAT LEFT

Wednesday 20 August - Saturday 23 August



Storyteller: Nick Kalenuik

2 Kings 2:1-14 and Luke 9:28-36

St Barnabas - 27 July
St Wulstans - 3 August

TAKE FIVE DEEP BREATHS. CHECK-IN WITH HOW YOU ARE FEELING – IN BODY, IN MIND, IN SPIRIT. TAKE FIVE MORE DEEP BREATHS AND ASK GOD TO ABIDE WITH YOU IN THIS MOMENT. NOW READ THE PASSAGE.

Verses from 2 Kings 2

Now when the Lord was about to take Elijah up to heaven by a whirlwind, Elijah and Elisha were on their way from Gilgal. Elijah said to Elisha, “Stay here; for the Lord has sent me as far as Bethel.” But Elisha said, “As the Lord lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave you.” So they went down to

Bethel. The company of prophets who were in Bethel came out to Elisha, and said to him, “Do you know that today the Lord will take your master away from you?” And he said, “Yes, I know; keep silent.”

Elijah said to him, “Elisha, stay here; for the Lord has sent me to Jericho.” But he

said, “As the Lord lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave you.” So they came to Jericho. The company of prophets who were at Jericho drew near to Elisha, and said to him, “Do you know that today the Lord will take your master away from you?” And he answered, “Yes, I know; be silent.”

Then Elijah said to him, “Stay here; for the Lord has sent me to the Jordan.” But he said, “As the Lord lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave you.” So the two of them went on. Fifty men of the company of prophets also went, and stood at some distance from them, as they both were standing by the Jordan. Then Elijah took his mantle and rolled it up, and struck the water; the water was parted to the one side and to the other, until the two of them crossed on dry ground.

When they had crossed, Elijah said to Elisha, “Tell me what I may do for you, before I am taken from you.” Elisha said, “Please let me inherit a double share of your spirit.” He responded, “You have asked a hard thing; yet, if you see me as I am being taken from you, it will be granted you; if not, it will not.” As they continued walking and talking, a chariot of fire and horses of fire separated the two of them, and Elijah ascended in a whirlwind into heaven. Elisha kept watching and crying out, “Father, father! The chariots of Israel and its horsemen!” But when he could no longer see him, he grasped his own clothes and tore them in two pieces.

He picked up the mantle of Elijah that had fallen from him, and went back and stood on the bank of the Jordan. He took the mantle of Elijah that had fallen from him, and struck the water, saying, “Where is the Lord, the God of Elijah?” When he had struck the water, the water was parted to the one side and to the other, and Elisha went over.



You can watch video resources by going to saintwulstans.online and looking for the post called **The Prophet That Left**



One | What details has the writer included to show that God is present and active in this story?

Two | The mantle is more than just a piece of clothing. What does the story show us about what the mantle means—and why it matters that Elisha picks it up?

Three | Elijah is a prophet of God in Israel. Elisha is his student, companion, and chosen successor. If this is the moment they part, then whose story is it?

Four | Swept up in a whirlwind, Elijah reappears nearly a thousand years later enveloped in the clouds on a mountain.

Jesus took with him Peter and John and James, and went up on the mountain to pray. And while he was praying, the appearance of his face changed, and his clothes became dazzling white. Suddenly they saw two men, Moses and Elijah, talking to him. They appeared in glory and were speaking of his departure, which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem. A cloud came and overshadowed them; and they were terrified as they entered the cloud. Then from the cloud came a voice that said, "This is my Son, my Chosen; listen to him!" When the voice had spoken, Jesus was found alone. And they kept silent and in those days told no one any of the things they had seen.

Verses from Luke 9

How does it feel to hear that the part we play in God's story might never truly be finished?

Five | What could it mean that Elijah's presence is somehow part of the way God chooses to show himself? How might that echo with your own history of experiencing God?

Six | Try to express your key thought from today as a short phrase that you can carry with you into the rest of your day and week, for example, "overshadowed". Turn to the back page.



May our Gracious God, who knows our grief and our desire to hold on, reshape our stories with the promise of Christ who never leaves us comfortless. Amen.



Story Eight: Forty Days of Summer 2025

THE SHEPHERD WHO ROARED

Sunday 24 August - Wednesday 27 August



Storyteller: Nick Stephens

John 10:11-18 and Amos 4:1-8

St Nicholas - 27 July
St Wulstans - 24 August

TAKE FIVE DEEP BREATHS. CHECK-IN WITH HOW YOU ARE FEELING – IN BODY, IN MIND, IN SPIRIT. TAKE FIVE MORE DEEP BREATHS AND ASK GOD TO ABIDE WITH YOU IN THIS MOMENT. NOW READ THE PASSAGE.

Verses from John 10

I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. The hired hand, who is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and runs away—and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. The hired hand runs away because a hired hand does not care for the sheep. I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father. And I lay down my life for the sheep. I have other sheep that do not belong to this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd. For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life in order to take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it up again. I have received this command from my Father.

You can watch video resources by going to saintwulstans.online



and looking for the post called **The Shepherd That Roared**

One | What sounds, sights, or sensations might Jesus' listeners have called to mind as they heard him speak about sheep and shepherds?

Two | Shepherd is a symbolic role in Israel's tradition, as both a pastor and prophet. What kind of people, with what kind of values, does this role call for?



Three | Amos was a shepherd by trade—and a Shepherd by calling. Around 750 BCE, he was sent by God to speak into a time of wealth, worship, and injustice in the northern kingdom of Israel.

Hear this word, you cows of Bashan who are on Mount Samaria, who oppress the poor, who crush the needy, who say to their husbands, "Bring something to drink!" The Lord God has sworn by his holiness: The time is surely coming upon you, when they shall take you away with hooks, even the last of you with fishhooks. Through breaches in the wall you shall leave, each one straight ahead; and you shall be flung out into Harmon, says the Lord.

Come to Bethel—and transgress; to Gilgal—and multiply transgression; bring your sacrifices every morning, your tithes every three days; bring a thank-offering of leavened bread, and proclaim freewill offerings, publish them; for so you love to do, O people of Israel! says the Lord God.

I gave you cleanness of teeth in all your cities, and lack of bread in all your places, yet you did not return to me, says the Lord. And I also

withheld the rain from you when there were still three months to the harvest; I would send rain on one city, and send no rain on another city; one field would be rained upon, and the field on which it did not rain withered; so two or three towns wandered to one town to drink water, and were not satisfied; yet you did not return to me, says the Lord.

Verses from Amos 4

As a prophet, Amos is speaking the truth as God sees it. What is he naming about the society around him?

Four | Through Amos, God doesn't stay distant or polite. What picture of God's priorities emerges in this passage? What seems to matter most to God here?

Five | What sustains the hearts and minds of those who act as whistleblowers on the world as it is, even when the risks are real and the resistance fierce?

Six | Try to express your key thought from today as a short phrase that you can carry with you into the rest of your day and week, for example, "return to me". Turn to the back page.



May our Gracious God, who knows our silence and our sharpness, breshape our stories with the truth of Christ who speaks with grace and power. Amen.

Story Nine: Forty Days of Summer 2025

THE PLOT THAT CRACKED

Thursday 28 August - Sunday 31 August



Storyteller: Nikki Groarke

Esther 4:1-17 and Matthew 15:21-28

Christ Church - 31 August

In 474 BCE, during the reign of King Xerxes (known in the Bible as Ahasuerus), a plot was in motion to wipe out the Jewish people across the Persian empire. Mordecai, a faithful Jew and the adoptive father of Esther—one of the king's royal wives—discovered the plan and sent word to her.

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Verses from Esther 4

When Mordecai learned all that had been done, Mordecai tore his clothes and put on sackcloth and ashes, and went through the city, wailing with a loud and bitter cry; he went up to the entrance of the king's gate, for no one might enter the king's gate wearing sackcloth. In every province, wherever the king's command and his decree came, there was great mourning among the Jews, with fasting and weeping and lamenting, and most of them lay in sackcloth and ashes.

When Esther's maids and her eunuchs came and told her, the queen was deeply distressed. She sent garments to clothe Mordecai, so that he might take off his sackcloth; but he would not accept them. Then Esther called for Hatach, one of the king's eunuchs, who had been appointed to attend her, and ordered him to go to Mordecai to learn what was happening and why. Hatach went out to Mordecai in the open square of the city in front of the king's gate, and Mordecai told him all that had happened to him, and the exact sum of money that Haman had promised to pay into the king's treasuries for the destruction of the Jews. Mordecai also gave him a copy of the written decree issued in Susa for their destruction, that he might show it to Esther, explain it to her, and charge

her to go to the king to make supplication to him and entreat him for her people.

Hatach went and told Esther what Mordecai had said. Then Esther spoke to Hatach and gave him a message for Mordecai, saying, "All the king's servants and the people of the king's provinces know that if any man or woman goes to the king inside the inner court without being called, there is but one law—all alike are to be put to death, except the one to whom the king holds out the golden sceptre so that he may live. I have not been called to come in to the king for thirty days."

When they told Mordecai what Esther had said, Mordecai told them to reply to Esther, "Do not think that in the king's palace you will escape any more than all the other Jews. For if you keep silence at such a time as this, relief and deliverance will rise for the Jews from another quarter, but you and your father's family will perish. Who knows? Perhaps you have come to royal dignity for just such a time as this."



You can read the whole story of Esther and watch video resources by going to saintwulstans.online

and looking for the post called **The Plot That Cracked**

reflections

One | Which movies or novels come to mind as you picture the eastern court of a king with many royal wives? What details help you imagine the setting?

Two | What risks and rules are revealed in this passage—and what do they show us about Esther’s position and power?

Three | Mordecai urges Esther to act, believing that this crisis may be the very reason she is where she is. What does it mean to recognise when your moment?

Four | Read this challenging encounter in the light of ‘face’ theories from the front page of this ABIDE resource.

A Canaanite woman came to Jesus, crying out, “Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David; my daughter is tormented by a demon.”

But he did not answer her at all. His disciples urged him to send her away. When Jesus finally spoke, he said, “I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.”

She knelt before him, saying, “Lord, help me.”

He answered, “It is not fair to take the children’s food and throw it to the dogs.”

She said, “Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters’ table.”



Then Jesus answered her, “Woman, great is your faith! Let it be done for you as you wish.” And her daughter was healed instantly.

Matthew 15:21–28

And so we see a desperate Gentile woman dares to approach a respected Jewish man in public—crossing boundaries of gender, ethnicity, and propriety. At first, Jesus ignores her. When he finally speaks, his words sound shockingly cruel. How do we make sense of this moment through the lens of face? What is being tested—and what is being revealed—when she risks her face to plead for justice, and he allows his own face to be reshaped in response?

Five | In one story, God is absent but active behind the scenes. In the other, Jesus is present and appears reluctant to engage. Which kind of divine presence do you recognise more in your own life—the quiet hiddenness of God taken on trust, or the delayed response that comes only after persistence?

Six | Try to express your key thought from today as a short phrase, for example, “for such a time as this”. Turn to the back page.



May our Gracious God, who knows our reluctance and our courage, reshape our stories with the boldness of Christ who risked everything for love. Amen.

Making Use of Our ABIDE Resources



These nine stories are available throughout the summer at our Sunday services. You can read the stories in any order you like. This booklet offers one gentle route through the readings. You might use it to prepare for an upcoming service or to reflect more deeply afterwards. Not every story is being shared in every congregation, so do keep an eye out for any you especially want to hear.

Allow yourself time for this moment with God. Make it special. Will you sit alone or with someone else? Will you make a cup of tea, light a candle, play music, or write in a journal? Let it be a time set apart. Each session begins with a simple breathing exercise to help you arrive in the moment.

Each story is given four days in our calendar. There's no need to rush—take your time across the week. Each story from the Hebrew Bible has a supporting passage from the Gospels. You'll also find background resources, music, and video online at — saintwulstans.online — look for the post about the story you are reading.

Let the questions and reflections settle slowly. Enjoy a chat with God. Tell him about the short phrase you've chosen from the sixth step of the session. Speak to him about your hopes and fears for today and tomorrow. Ask him who to pray for today. Make time for this collect we have written especially for our summer together

*Gracious Father, you are the God who sees us
and who forms us through your story and ours.
Shape us by your Spirit to live with humility and honesty,
until we see you face to face
in the story that outlasts the generations;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

Spend a few moments lingering with the short phrase you chose as the sixth step, repeating gently in your heart or quietly outloud. Finish with thanksgiving and the Lord's Prayer.