

Update on Sunday and Wednesday services:

Following the previous Government announcement re: new restrictions and guidelines - "Rule of Six." . As at this time the Church of England has advised that regular worship is still being allowed subject to the existing guidelines – although now no group or 'bubble' can be greater than six and each 'bubble' needs to remain two metres apart.



Sunday morning services at 10.30am – **next week we are in Congresbury**
Wednesday at 9.00am in Congresbury,
followed by a socially distanced coffee or whatever at St Congar's Coffee Shop.

As soon as we hear any further news we will, of course, let people know as soon as we can.

Matt



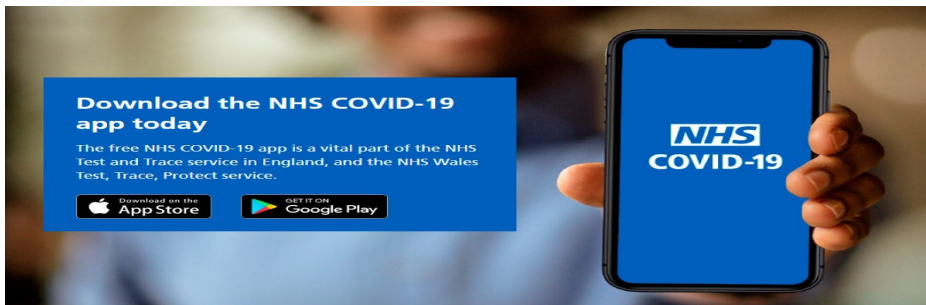
What's This?

The image on the left is a **QR code** (Quick Response Code) You may have seen these QR codes before. They are used in place of barcodes to hold more information, for example your address on a package label to be returned.

The NHS and gov.uk have begun to use these QR codes to aid in their 'test and trace' scheme, and you may have seen the codes in shops, restaurants and businesses.

From next week, we will be displaying our own personalised codes in our churches. You are under no obligation to use the codes, but if you download the 'NHS COVID-19' app from the Apple App Store or Google Play Store, you can 'scan' in and out of our churches.

If you have any queries, please contact me, kirsty.bowles@newcreationchurches.org.uk



Thought for the Week: "One Big Step."

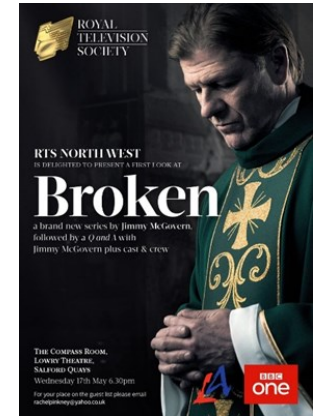
In amongst everything else this week in the News this week, a small group of people have shown incredible courage. They come from a growing community of people who have lost everything in the murky world on Online Gambling – in their case particularly over football.



I say, "incredible courage" because it would be all too easy for people who maybe don't know too much about this murky world to say, "well, it serves them right." And, listening to their stories, certainly a significant part of their coming to terms with their problem involves accepting their own personal responsibility. But I would suggest its only a part, even a minor part, of a much bigger problem.

I can remember back to the first time I came into contact with someone who was addicted to Gambling. It's impact on both them and their family was much the same as if it was a drink or a drug addiction. They and their family were torn apart by lies, buy a 'hunger' for 'one more chance,' and by the reality that very few, if ever, win.

It wasn't long after that a TV drama series by the BBC called "Broken," starring Sean Bean as Fr Michael Kerrigan, was aired in 2017. In one of the many 'broken' stories that were, in my view, brilliantly demonstrated all too powerfully in the series, was that of Roz Demichelis, a successful and accomplished accounts manager by day, but who, behind the scenes, had a huge gambling addiction in the shadows of another life, and then faced the reality of her two worlds colliding with incredible force and violence for all concerned. Sean Bean won a BAFTA for his portrayal and I'm surprised that the series didn't get higher acclaim than it did. But then, maybe the story it tells is all too close to home.



I listened to a Radio 4 documentary a couple of months ago that involved a 'whistle-blower' from one of the big 'Stock-market registered' Gambling companies, one that appears on the shirts of one of the Premiership Football Team as their sponsor and who runs ads on mainstream TV especially around sporting occasions. He gave a chilling account of how it was his job to deliberately target certain individuals who were 'the most vulnerable' gamblers. Not those who necessarily gambled the most, but those who were most likely to 'give up' the most to pursue that all too elusive 'win' and who they knew couldn't stop. Texts, up to a hundred times a day with "top tips", incentives to "take a holiday" but "have a £100 bonus on us for when you come back," all these and many other tactics were all part of the beguiling allure which then burnt holes in the gambler addict's psyche.

It's an insidious disease and it's all covered over by legitimacy and by big money being used to prop up the out of control wage bills of so much of British sport and by those who seek to influence government.

I am reminded therefore of that beautiful and iconic story of the woman caught in adultery and dragged before the Pharisees and Sanhedrin (the Jewish ruling Council) in John ch 8. All too willing to through her to the wolves as simply the 'scape goat', Jesus instead turns on the Council Members and in that classic line states, "those without blemish are the only ones eligible to cast the first stone." And, at least give the religious leaders some credit, none actually thought themselves above reproach so all put down their stones and walked away perhaps harbouring their anger and resentment for a later day when they could turn it upon the one who had so publicly shone a light upon their own inadequacies as individuals and as an institution.

Turning to the woman, Jesus says, "Do they not condemn you? Well, neither do I. Go and seek to change your life." Whether two thousand years ago or today, such a change, especially if then done in the public eye, takes incredible courage. It feels very much like what can one voice do to change the power of these big multi-nationals, which can come in many different colours and forms. It probably really does feel like David and Goliath.

But into this situation, stand five brave people, willing to be open about their own vulnerability in a desire to shine a spotlight upon a desire to see change and to encourage others not to be lured into this labyrinth of despair, despondency and pain. They are planning to walk 130 miles, five times the length of the Marathon, to raise awareness and to show how much of a struggle it is to live day to day with the after-effects of a Gambling Addiction.

A walk for justice, whose purpose may not be understood by many, but to those who have suffered, and I believe to Jesus, a walk of those who have suffered, and continue to suffer, in silence because of a complicity by those in big business and in the sporting world that feeds itself on them.

Matt Thomson

If you would like to find out more about the five involved in "The Big Step" and their call to raise the issue of the power of Gambling in Sport, or if you wish to join them in seeking to change the ability of Gambling Companies to get free advertising on Sports shirts not just of professional players but through tens of thousands of sports merchandise, including to children, then please go to their website: <https://the-bigstep.com/> (This includes an online petition to raise the issue in the House of Commons.)

If you, or someone you know, has a problem with Gambling and would like to talk to someone – see "Gamblers Anonymous" and their website for help: <https://www.gamblersanonymous.org.uk/>

If you are interested in watching the series "Broken" by the BBC, it is still available on DVD via Amazon or on "Britbox," if you subscribe to it.

A very powerful version of Jesus in this story of John ch 8, is set at the end, in the song "You raised me up" by West Life. See YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sza4rh1YzsM>

CHURCH @ HOME

JOIN US FOR CHURCH LIVE ON FACEBOOK EVERY SUNDAY AT 10:30 AM!

AND FOLLOW THE DAILY VIDEO BLOGS, PRAYERS & STORIES ON

www.facebook.com/newcreationchurches



Live Stream Church for Sunday: "NEW Church for a NEW Society – Two Churches as ONE" - 10.30am:

THIS Sunday we will be in **Banwell** for the second of our "Themes of John's Gospel." Our next theme is to look at "How God sees relationships."

As we discovered previously, John's Gospel is such an engaging account of Jesus life. Known as the "spiritual" Gospel, John had more time than the others to sit back not only to remember the events of Jesus' life as best as he could, but also to think in greater depth about what they therefore could mean. The other themes we will be looking at over the coming weeks include:

- Relationships
- Spirituality
- Beauty
- Freedom
- Truth
- Power



So please join us for the second theme this week. The service will last approximately fifty minutes to an hour.

You can access the Service by joining us in church or **LIVE** via the "New Creation Facebook Page" : <https://www.facebook.com/NewCreationChurches/> or catch up later via the New Creation website: <http://www.newcreationchurches.org.uk/> or New Creation YouTube Channel : <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCXn34qIXIXBeOAmO1M1KbBw/>

Matt Thomson

Daily Blog – What's happening Next? A Journey into John's Gospel and how Jesus sees the world: "Themes in the Gospel of John" by Tom Wright, New Testament writer.



As mentioned above, in our "Livestream of Sunday Services," we are going to begin looking at seven themes within the Gospel of John.

This week we will look at the second of the seven themes, that of "Relationships" and see how by looking at how God sees relationships may help us truly see each other and ourselves differently.

We hope you will join us each day as members of the Daily Blog team share with us a short five minute video picking up on various Bible Stories and scenarios that explore this theme of God's understanding of Relationships throughout the coming week.

If you would like to follow the Daily Blog as part of your journey of faith, you can access via the "New Creation Facebook Page" : <https://www.facebook.com/NewCreationChurches/>, via the New Creation website: <http://www.newcreationchurches.org.uk/> or New Creation YouTube Channel : <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCXn34qIXIXBeOAmO1M1KbBw/>