

“The Newsletter”

For MARTLESHAM & BRIGHTWELL

Sunday 15 March 2026



Camel through the eye of a needle? Mark 10:17-31 (Lent Lunch talk)

In classical literature, there can be a theme of impossible tasks being accomplished, normally because the hero has some supernatural power – look at the 12 tasks of Hercules for example. So is Jesus setting here an impossible task that we can only accomplish through heroic means?

The Persians had a saying to express the impossible: it would be easier to put an elephant through the eye of a needle. The camel was a Jewish adaptation (the largest animal in Israel was a camel).

Some theorise that the needle Jesus was speaking of was the Needle Gate, supposedly a low and narrow after-hours entrance found in the wall surrounding Jerusalem. It was purposely small for security reasons, and a camel could only go through it by stripping off any saddles or packs and crawling through on its knees. The problem with this theory is there is no evidence such a gate ever existed. Beyond that, what sane camel driver would go through such contortions when larger gates were easily accessible?

Others claim that the word translated “camel” (Greek: *kamelos*) should actually be “cable” (Greek: *kamilos*). Then the verse would read that it is easier for a cable (or rope) to go through the eye of a needle. To believe this, however, brings up more problems than it solves, namely casting doubt on the inerrancy and inspiration of Scripture.

The most likely explanation is that Jesus was using hyperbole, a figure of speech that exaggerates for emphasis.

Jesus’ message is clear—it is impossible for anyone to be saved on their own merits. Since wealth was seen as proof of God’s approval, it was commonly taught by the rabbis that rich people were blessed by God and were, therefore, the most likely candidates for heaven. Jesus destroyed that notion, and along with it, the idea that anyone can earn eternal life. The disciples had the appropriate response to this startling statement. They were utterly amazed and asked, “Who then can be saved?” in the next verse. If the wealthy among them, which

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Sunday 15 March

10:00 am – Morning Worship – St Michael’s

11:00 am – Holy Communion – St Mary’s

Monday 16 March

8:30 am - Morning Prayer - St Mary’s

Sunday 22 March

10:00 am – Holy Communion – St Michael’s

3:00 pm – Evensong – St John’s

Monday 23 March

8:30 am - Morning Prayer - St Mary’s

Wednesday 25 March

10:00 am Holy Communion – St Michael’s

Sunday 29 March

10:00 am – Holy Communion – St Michael’s

11:00 am – Holy Communion – St Mary’s

Monday 30 March

8:30 am - Morning Prayer - St Mary’s

Sunday 29 March

10:00 am – Holy Communion – St Michael’s

11:00 am – Holy Communion – St Mary’s

Sunday 5 April - Easter Sunday

10:00 am – Holy Communion – St Michael’s

11:00 am – Holy Communion – St Mary’s

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included the super-spiritual Pharisees and scribes, were unworthy of heaven, what hope was there for a poor person?

Jesus' answer is the basis of the gospel: "With man this is impossible, but not with God; all things are possible with God." We are saved through God's gifts of grace, mercy, and faith. Nothing we do earns salvation for us. It is the poor in spirit who inherit the kingdom of God (Matthew 5:3), those who recognise their spiritual poverty and their utter inability to do anything to justify themselves to a holy God. The rich are often blind to their spiritual poverty because they are proud of their accomplishments and have contented himself with their wealth. They are as likely to humble himself before God as a camel is to crawl through the eye of a needle.

So what of us? Notice that when Jesus spoke to the man, he didn't just dismiss him. Jesus, looking at him, loved him and said, 'You lack one thing; go, sell what you own, and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me.' Jesus isn't turning people away. He wants everyone to come to him.

And what of the rich? Whatever our current status, we are among the rich in this world currently. Are we excluded? Is there anything else that we are relying on to keep us going that means we don't turn to God? Whatever is holding us back, Jesus is wanting us to turn to him and to rely on him. And he won't turn us away.

Toby

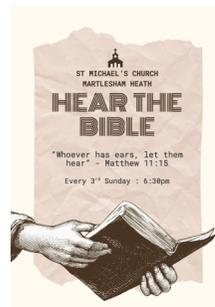
Hear The Bible

I've heard it said before that if you want to hear God speak, read your Bible. If you want to hear God speak audibly, read your Bible out loud.

Over the year we are going to be reading out loud most of the New Testament. Last month we read Mark, and we continue **this Sunday (15th) at St Michael's** with the Gospel of St Luke. Luke is a detailed, historical account of the life, ministry, death and resurrection of Jesus, written to provide certainty about the Christian faith. You are all invited to come and join in, **starting at 6.30pm**, you can come and read a chapter if you wish, or you can follow it along, or you can just sit and listen.

Rob

Next month will be The Book of Acts on 19th April



Testimonies from the congregation

Whenever I face a medical procedure, no matter how simple, my legs turn to jelly, my pulse races, and I become a mental wreck.

"A member of the team will be available to hold your hand during the operation, should you want them to," it said in the leaflet. Should I take up the offer, I wondered as I sat in the waiting-room. But would I really be reassured by a complete stranger who didn't know anything about me? Surely I was big enough to manage this on my own?

"Breathe - this controls the heart-rate - long deep breaths and keep very still." I told myself sternly. As if from nowhere, to accompany my breathing exercises, the words of a favourite worship song popped into my brain:

"Be still, and know that I am God....."

I am the Lord that healeth thee (how appropriate!)....."

In Thee, O Lord, I put my trust....."

My mind went back to a recent service at St Michael's when we studied the Creed - "Do you believe and trust....?" Easy to believe, but harder to truly trust. I kept repeating the final verse of the song to myself as I sat waiting.

"Would you like someone to hold your hand?" I was asked three times by different people in the preparation stages. "No thank-you," I replied tentatively, "I think I will be all right."

As I was led into theatre I realised that I felt perfectly calm, and the whole procedure was nothing at all to worry about. Thank-you Lord!

A church member

St Mary's Spring Clean

On **Saturday 21st March** we will be holding a spring-cleaning morning at St. Mary's. This is to prepare the church and churchyard for Easter. We will be there **from 9.30am to 12.30pm** and you are welcome to come any time between those times. Please bring your own cleaning or gardening tools if you have them, but if not, some will be provided. Refreshments will be served mid-morning.



(Image is AI generated, Ed.)

Roger

Sunday morning 'Zoom' Coffee invitation

We apologise but there will be **no after-service Zoom coffee chat on Sunday 15th March due to family commitments**, but normal service should resume on 22nd.

For more information, please email info@martleshamcofe.org.uk

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<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100068833925952>

<https://www.youtube.com/@martleshambenefice>

Lent Lunch

- Food, fellowship and support for the persecuted church

Each Tuesday lunchtime during lent you are invited to join us at St Michael's for homemade soup and bread, a chance to chat to friends and a short talk. The meal is free but this year we are asking for donations towards Open Doors who support the persecuted church. Find out more about the work they do at <https://www.opendoorsuk.org/>



The next lunch is on **Tuesday March 17th at 12.30pm.**

(Image is edited with AI assistance, Ed.)

Away day at home

-
18th and 19th April

Remember to sign up

See previous newsletter (1st February) for details, or ask Toby or Rob

Sign Up!

