

Group discussion notes

To accompany 6 week sermon series

Based on 'Sharing faith the Jesus way'

AIM

To help Christians share their faith and make new disciples with key lessons from the way in which Jesus did it.

These notes are generally as they appeared in our weekly news sheet at Allesley in Coventry. This is where the 6 week sermon series took place in the spring of 2010.

Each week we explored the main teaching theme of a chapter in 'Sharing faith the Jesus way'. The main reading for the sermon each week formed the basis of the group discussion.

Both the sermon series notes and these group discussion notes are to be found on www.jesus360.org.uk. They are provided in pdf form to keep the format, but also in Word in case you want to cut and paste to amend and adapt to your situation.

As we did the sermon series and had the group discussions as 'Sharing faith the Jesus way' was being written, we do not have any experience of people reading the book at the same time. If you would like to, do write up your experience to share with others and send it via www.jesus360.org.uk.

Week 1/6 'Sharing faith the Jesus way': everyone can share their faith.

We start a six week series today, looking at how Jesus went about sharing good news. Although the call and commission of every Christian to 'Go and make disciples' we often find it very difficult to do.

Discuss: 6 reasons why you think 'sharing faith' is so difficult today.

We have made sharing faith, or 'evangelism', the 'dreaded "e" word'. Even evangelists have problems with evangelism. Rebecca Manley Pippert (in her book *Out of the Saltshaker* IVP 2009 p11) said 'There was a part of me which secretly felt was something you shouldn't do to your dog, let alone a friend'.

Discuss: What do you associate with the word 'evangelism'? What has been your experience, both good and bad?

We have gone wrong somewhere along the line and need to look again at Jesus the 'pioneer and perfecter of our faith'. How did he share the good news? Are there lessons we can learn today which makes it possible, enjoyable, and a life changing positive experience for the people we seek to reach today?

The first point is that we do not have to be perfect to share the good news. Second, looking at the Gospels we see that there is no 'one way' of doing it. Third, the responses to Jesus were many and varied. The man brought for healing and lowered through the roof was given forgiveness of sins while the rich man asking about eternal life was told to give away his goods to the poor.

Discuss how you came to a position of faith in Christ? How many different ways are illustrated in the group?

Read Jn 4: 4-26 and discuss how Jesus shared good news and how the woman at the well responded.

Homework Keep the picture of Jesus with the woman at the well. Reflect on your own conversation with one person this week. Compare the two and pray for what God might show you as a result.

Week 2/6 'Sharing faith the Jesus way': Who do you think you're talking to?

We continue to consider our call to 'make disciples' with lessons from the Jesus way of doing it. Last week we considered how Jesus accepted the woman at the well. This week he meets the need of the man lowered through the roof. Jesus meets people in different places but has a similar attitude.

Read Luke 5: 17-26

How did Jesus respond to the unusual circumstances?

What needs did Jesus meet?

Who is Jesus speaking to?

What do we learn of 'Jesus way'?

Discuss. *An essentially biblical emphasis – all too often ignored by the church – is that Christ is Lord and Saviour of the whole of a person, or he is no saviour at all. Because Jesus insisted on seeing the person whole, one could never be sure which aspect of a person's need he would tackle first. Here comes the paralysed man, helpless and obviously sick in body. His friends have bought him hoping for a simple cure, and Jesus talks about the forgiveness of sins. Here on the other hand comes a clear case of spiritual need, an enquirer asking how to gain eternal life, and Jesus gives him an economic answer, telling him how to give away his goods to the poor. Because ultimately Jesus cannot rest content until all of a person's needs are fully met, it does not matter much to him where he starts on the work of salvation'. (John V Taylor).*

Consider how Jesus meets people at their point of need and begins the work of salvation for each of us in a different way. Is there a 'one size fits all' Gospel? How can we put the big picture together and work out the essential message of the good news? Consider the diamond and discuss the different facets of the Gospel.

Homework During the week, read the first 5 chapters Mark's Gospel. You will find the parallel reading of the man lowered through the roof and various other miracles, encounters and words of Jesus. What picture are you beginning to get of the Gospel? Can you identify different facets?

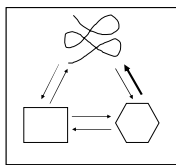
Week 3/6 Sharing faith the Jesus way: 'God loves me, so?'

This is the third week in our series where we have looked at the Jesus way of sharing faith. Drawing lessons from the woman at the well and the man lowered through the roof, we now look at the famous parable of the Prodigal Son. Or is it the Parable of the Fathers Love? Or is it the Parable of Big Brother's response?

Read Luke 15: 11-32 and discuss the various characters, events, and reactions. What's the key message?

God's love is the first element of the Gospel message and should be the 'driver' for all we do. Is it?

Below is a 'Haynes Manual' exploded view of what happens when we share our faith. It has limitations but can help us picture what we are trying to do in evangelism.



God's infinite love is at the top. 'Me' is the rectangle. The other person is the hexagon.
God loves me, and I have responded by being a disciple (two arrows left)
God loves the other person. We pray that they may respond their own way (arrows right).
Sharing faith the Jesus way is about a two way relationship (arrows bottom)
Note the Jesus way is all about building relationships (dialogue > monologue)

Discuss how the three relationships relate to each other. Can you love if not first loved by God?
Do we pray and encourage people to make a response to God's love in Jesus? How can we do that?

Song If you can, sing or listen to the song: How deep the Father's love for us

Homework In week one you thought about people you had shared your faith with (you have done this even if we said we were going to church). Each day this week pray for them to know / respond to the Fathers love.

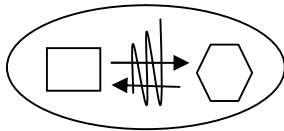
Week 4/6 of 'Sharing faith the Jesus way': Prayer / Care / Share – Dare

Read Luke 10: 25-37 the story of the Good Samaritan

What was the question from the teacher of the law to Jesus?
What was Jesus reply?

Do you remember the long quote in the group discussion notes two weeks ago from John V Taylor? Jesus often says something different to what you would expect. The man lowered through the roof and brought for healing was given forgiveness of sin. Here the teacher of the law asks about eternal life and Jesus tells him to love his neighbour.

When we share faith is should be in dialogue and not as a monologue. Nothing puts people off quicker than being talked to .. on the other hand we can be like Arctic rivers 'frozen at the mouth'. Jesus way is to listen, speak and listen again, while praying for discernment of Holy Spirit, we should follow example.



This is a simple model of communication between two people
The two arrows show dialogue and relationship growing
Squiggly line is what gets in the way: interference
All surrounded by the environment which affects everything

Can you see how this applies to you and the people you know?

Can you see how it applies to Jesus having a conversation with the expert in the law? Lk 10:25-37?

Paul Weston has looked at the number of times Jesus used dialogue and questions in his evangelism:

Matthew 94 Mark 59 Luke 82 John 49

Of course many are repeats as the Synoptic Gospels are similar but the point is made.

Homework. Consider how you build your relationships this week.

Ask, what part does conversation have in evangelism?

Reflect, how does non verbal communication fit with the Parable of the Good Samaritan?

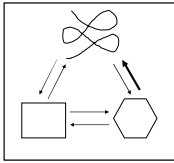
Week 5/6 'Sharing faith the Jesus way': assist people on their journey with Jesus

Jesus accompanied his disciples on their faith journey. Peter good example.

Jesus first and last words to Peter were 'follow me'. Mk 1:17 and Jn 21:22.

Peter, with Jesus all the way, illustrates the highs and lows of discipleship. Do we go up and down?
'When did Peter become a Christian?' Look at his journey and discuss the questions raised.

- Jesus accepted Peter as he was (fisherman, brash, impulsive and failure in courtyard)
- Jesus gave Peter great encouragement: he was part of the inner circle (w James + John)
- Jesus had high expectation (Rock on which build my church: Mt 16:18)
- Peter was with Jesus for three years and followed him to most places
- Peter was apprenticed by Jesus and empowered by Holy Spirit for preaching at Pentecost
- Peter was often the spokesman for the other disciples and took a lead in responding to Jesus



The reading chosen and Peters story picked out to show that Jesus was a 'mentor' 'coach' and 'mission accompanier' to the disciples and Peter in particular. Peter was a new Christian. The question is how can we help new Christians grow too? Phone, text, email, lunch, cell, church but chiefly prayer (Discuss).

Was someone a mentor to you? Pray for God to give you someone to encourage in faith.

So how do we encourage / empower people to learn and grow: Christian > disciple > minister > apostle

What are the stepping stones of faith and how can we help each other on the journey?

Ideas for action: Develop prayer partners. Seek spiritual direction. Discuss daily Bible reading in cell groups. Look at the Cursillo questions and Ignation 'Examen' as helpful tools.

Go on in faith / grow in faith and / go out in faith to share good news of God's love, forgiveness, new life.

William Carey: Expect great things from God and attempt great things for God. Do it this week.

Week 6/6 'Sharing faith the Jesus way': Continue growing the Jesus way.

Q: Can you explain the triangle of relationships considered over the past 6 weeks?

Our final week goes back to the beginning and looks at the love God has for us and our response to him.

If we continue to grow in faith then 'prayer, care and share' is fed and encouraged.

The disciples at the beach BBQ were fed by Jesus. List 5 ways in which we can be spiritually fed.

Read John 21: 15 -19

Jesus came alongside when disciples thought it was all over. Do you feel hopeless about sharing faith?

Peter denied Jesus and seen the crucifixion so very low. The resurrection changed everything!

Repeat experience and repeat call to 'Follow me'.

Look upwards to Jesus, Onwards to where he leads and Outwards as reach the world and continue his work.

HOW?

- 1) Let Jesus come to you. Hear his call 'feed my lambs'. Who are the 'lambs'?
- 2) Receive the Holy Spirit? Remember the Great Commission? ('Go' and 'Lo') Read Acts 1:8
- 3) Look to the new call and harvest field. Pray to the Lord of the harvest. Are you praying?
- 4) Have the love of God and their response as focus for your prayer
- 5) Share aspects of God's love, forgiveness and new life in Christ as people interested.

Peter's Pentecostal sermon illustrates his 'new life'. Discuss how.

As with Peter, Jesus is with us in the ups and downs of life, and sends us out to share faith

We need feeding to share as the mouth speaks what the heart is full of. Mt 12:34

Billy Graham said 3 secrets of effective evangelism were 1) prayer 2) prayer 3) prayer.

Are you praying for people in the scheme of 'sowing reaping keeping' the good news?

Review: what would have been helpful during this course?

What could you do as a result of considering this 6 week series, 'Sharing faith the Jesus way?'

For more information about these notes visit: www.jesus360.org.uk