

In daily life – towards imitation

Here's a story or testimony to flesh this out... Watch one or all of these... Car Boot Fair Church near Hastings.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oTd_CvtjDIA&feature=youtu.be (5 min video). The

Saturday Gathering in Halifax

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WGtNfsz_zQ&feature=youtu.be (9 min video)

Geochurche. (<http://geochurche.com/> website) The Order of the Black Sheep

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8Jy7b-i_bg&feature=youtu.be (7 minute video)

What does God say to you through them?

STUDY QUESTIONS – EXPLORING THE INFORMATION (ABOUT 30 MINUTES)

Luke 12: 22-31. Read this meditatively. In the difficulties of life what rhythms help you live in the present moment? What helps you keep God's kingdom at the centre of your attention?

1 Corinthians 9: 16-23. To what extent are Paul's words here about preaching for everyone? How does he make himself a slave? How might you? Why does he do it?

Watch <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i7trUGmcCqE>. Why do we need to respond to this?

Living it out

What support would you need to take the "long road outside the church and stay there" for the sake of reaching others?

Prayer suggestion:

Watch one of the stories above. Pray for them. Pray for people you know who would never come to church by name. Pray for God to give us fresh imagination in this season.

Joining a group and other resources:

We encourage everyone to join a group if possible. We have daytime or evening groups and youth cells. If you would like to know more, please visit our website, or contact Guy on 01423 504160. There are many great resources to help you pray and enjoy the Scriptures on a daily basis.

www.pray-as-you-go.org A 12 minute guided prayer and meditation to listen to.

<https://www.wordlive.org> Many excellent daily reading approaches, available as an app.

<http://www.sacredspace.ie/> A short guided prayer and meditation to read.

Or download the app from Soul Survivor, with short daily videos: <http://bible.soulsurvivor.com/>



INSPIRE fresh expressions

Everywhere...in everything

Weekly discipleship and spiritual growth resources for all ages, groups and individuals. Follow up material on Sunday's teaching for groups and individuals.

Week beginning: 1st February 2015.

GROWING AT HOME

Three suggested discipleship activities suitable for all ages to help you grow, based on *Up – to God; In – to each other; Out - to mission*

UP

Make a triangle out of card. Write **Up** on the top corner. Think about the "Up". Jesus says: "Don't be anxious about your life – what you should eat; or about your body – what you should wear. The nations of the world go searching for all that stuff, and your Father knows you need it." (Luke 12:22,30) Talk to God, your Father who loves you, about what is going on in your life this week.

IN

Write "In" on the bottom left corner of your triangle. This reminds us to develop relationships with each other in God's family and learn together. Play this dressing-up game. Find as many different outfits as you can and put them all on – either all at once (!), or have a race through lots of costume changes. Thank God for all your clothes, and then ask Him to help you stay focused on living God's way rather than 'dressing up'. Say together Jesus' words: "Life is more than food! The body is more than clothing!" "This is what you should search for: God's kingdom! Then all the rest will be given you as well." (Luke 12:23,31)

OUT

Write "Out" on the bottom right corner of your triangle. This reminds us that God's care and kindness isn't just for us, but for the whole world! As you go around this week, to school or work, thank God that He is interested in everything, and cares for all the other children and adults as much as he cares for you. Share His care and kindness with those around you.

DAILY READINGS AND PRAYERS.

These daily readings are the same as the ones used in church every morning from 9 – 9.30. Feel free to join us, or use them at home. Read one or both of the readings asking yourself, “What is God saying to me, personally?” and, “How can I respond today?” If you are pressed for time there is a focus verse from the passages. Try reading the verse slowly, three or four times, allowing God to shape your heart and mind though His word. You can use these together with our daily prayer diary from the monthly newsheet.

Monday 2nd February. Candlemas

Lord Jesus Christ, light of the nations and glory of Israel: make your home among us, and present us pure and holy to your heavenly Father, your God, and our God.

Tuesday 3rd February.

Readings: Psalm 5, John 17:6-19. Focus verse: 16 They are not of the world, even as I am not of it. 17 Sanctify them by[d] the truth; your word is truth. 18 As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world.

Wednesday 4th February.

Readings: Psalm 119:1-32, John 17:20-end. Focus verse: I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, 21 that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me.

Thursday 5th February.

Readings: Psalm 14, John 18:1-11. Focus verse: 11 Jesus commanded Peter, “Put your sword away! Shall I not drink the cup the Father has given me?”

Friday 6th February

Readings: Psalm 17, John 18: 12-27. Focus verse: 26 One of the high priest’s servants, a relative of the man whose ear Peter had cut off, challenged him, “Didn’t I see you with him in the garden?” 27 Again Peter denied it, and at that moment a rooster began to crow.

Saturday 7th February

Readings: Psalm 20, John 18: 28-end. Focus verse: 36 Jesus said, “My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jewish leaders. But now my kingdom is from another place.” 37 “You are a king, then!” said Pilate. Jesus answered, “You say that I am a king. In fact, the reason I was born and came into the world is to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me.”

First thoughts:

Have you been able to read the community audit? What are your first thoughts?

This week’s teaching in a nutshell:

The kingdom is the centre. 1 Corinthians 9: 16-23; Luke 12: 22-31.

If you are a Christian, there are no guarantees of earthly safety. Christianity does not offer a magic wand to get rid of suffering. But Jesus does give us a focus which can radically transform everything in this life. On the surface this passage might sound a bit like that song, “Don’t worry, be happy,” because God makes everything right. But if you read it closely Jesus, who was tortured and crucified, isn’t saying that at all. Consider the ravens, and the lilies...is he saying they have no troubles? No – the lilies are here today, but tomorrow are thrown onto the fire. Does that sound like fun to you? Their secret is not that they don’t suffer, **but that they live in the present moment.** But here’s the deeper thing: in the midst of the ups and downs of life, Jesus says, the ravens and the lilies are happy because they don’t set their hearts on things like clothes and food. They don’t set their hearts on temporary things. Instead their first concern, their primary concern, is what Jesus calls the kingdom of God. Making God king comes number one.

This season we are considering our mission to put the kingdom first. Because that is why we exist, and that is what will make us content. ...We watched a video which addresses a real problem we face...how to get beyond the walls of the church to those for whom church is alien? <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i7trUGmcCqE> To reach people for the kingdom of God, we are going to have to do more than stay within these walls. A “fresh expression” is a form of church for our changing culture, established primarily for the benefit of people who are not yet members of any church. Guy shared four examples... At the heart of fresh expressions is a different way of thinking about church. The aim is not to provide a stepping stone into existing church, but to form new churches in their own right. Many existing churches operate with a 'you come to us' mindset. 'Would you like to join us?' is an invitation to come to 'our' church, set out as we like, at a time that fits us, in a style that we have pre-arranged. The flow is from outside-in: from the world into the congregation. Fresh expressions have a 'we'll come to you' mindset instead. They start not with an invitation ('Come to us on our terms'), but with an offer ('We're willing to come to you, serve you and stay with you. If you want, we'll also help you to be church in a way that suits you - in your style, not ours'). The aim is not to provide a stepping stone into existing church, but to form new churches in their own right.

But there are lots of questions aren’t there? When is it a church? What about worship? How do you discern what’s right for an area? What’s involved in setting one up? Over the next few weeks we will be exploring these questions, telling stories, and inviting people in who have experience of this journey. In April Karin Shaw, the diocesan Fresh Expressions adviser, will be sharing a day with us. We don’t yet have any fixed plans. But we do have a vision as a church to widen our doors. We are not content with the status quo. The plan is this: as we tell stories over the Spring, as we wrestle with some of the questions, we trust that God will provoke and inspire. While we don’t have specific plans, we have got a process and support in place for anyone who wants to explore further, and as you may know, there are a few people in the church who have been chewing this stuff over for a while. We don’t know what life will hold. Safety is not guaranteed. But what we do know is depending on God in the moment, and seeking His kingdom first makes for the most fulfilling life, and leads us beyond our walls.

SUNDAY’S TEACHING: RESOURCES FOR GROUPS OR INDIVIDUALS.