

STUDY QUESTIONS

- What does Jesus dying for you say about the value God places on your life?
- How does this impact your identity?
- How do you respond to such a love as this?

Read 2 Cor 5:14-17

- How does your life function when you are in the place of king (living for yourself) as opposed to living for Christ (who died for you)?
- What happens in the human heart when the old is gone and the new is here?
- What is set free?

- How does Jesus' victory impact your covenant relationship to the Father?
- In what way are you living within the victory of Jesus?
- How does Jesus' victory on the Cross speak to your failures and your future?

Read 2 Cor 5:18-21

- Underline the phrases that speak of kingdom, power and authority.
- As Jesus goes to the cross for you, you are to go into the world to represent Him. God has given us the exact same task that He gave His Son, Jesus. Why do you think this is?

APPLICATION

What do you think it would look like for you to be an ambassador of Christ in the place where you work, play and live?

PRAYER

*Make us one with Christ
One with each other
and one in ministry to all the world...
until Christ comes.*

Spend time praying for the transformative power of God's love to be known in and through you.

PLEASE PRAY FOR...

- **Teachers and students returning to school after the half-term break.**
- **Guy (and family), as he returns to St Mark's after Sabbatical.**
- **Roy Coles (Mike's Dad), after a serious accident.**
- **Pat Lilley, as she continues her recovery after a fall at home.**

This week's study notes were written by Dan Watts



St Mark's

**Inspiring each other to
love and follow Jesus Christ...
everywhere in everything**

INDIVIDUAL STUDY NOTES

**Week Beginning:
3rd November 2013**

KINGDOM AND COVENANT: JESUS AND THE CROSS

WORSHIP:

Prayerfully read through Isaiah 53:3-7, letting God speak to you about the depth of the love that He has for you, that would lead Him to do something such as this. Underline the words or phrases that God is highlighting.

READINGS: LUKE 22:7-23; 2 COR. 5:14-21

Two famous botanists were once touring the Glens of Scotland in search of rare specimens to add to their collections, when one of them spotted a quite remarkable flower. The problem was that it was growing down in the deep gully, completely inaccessible to them. So they searched out the nearest village and found a local lad they thought might be willing to be lowered down on a rope and pick the flower for them. They offered him 10 shillings, a handsome sum, if he would help them out. "I'll not do it for 10 shillings", he replied so they offered him 15, then even a pound. When they realised that he wouldn't budge, they asked him what would persuade him to go down into the gully for them. "I'll only do it if my father is holding the end of the rope", he replied. So they went to see the father, explained the situation, and the father willingly agreed to help. The boy then went down on the rope, picked the botanists' flowers, and brought them safely to the surface. He knew his father wouldn't let him fall.

Relationship always leads to responsibility. I am a husband, father, son, friend and minister. Being in relationship affects the choices I make and the way that I live because I have responsibilities.

Throughout the Bible God is continually seeking to make a covenant. The invitation is "come" to me, come into a loving relationship with me – Yahweh, the great 'I am'. "I will be your God and you will be my people". It is an invitation to receive love, protection and provision of the stronger covenant partner. It is an invitation to enjoy the oneness of a gracious, forgiving,

merciful relationship with the all powerful, majestic creator of the world.

God made a covenant with Adam, Noah, Abraham, and Moses, and with his chosen people Israel. It was an invitation to come and enjoy the presence of Yahweh as loving King - the provider and protector. But that covenant relationship comes with a kingdom responsibility “go....” - to tend the earth, to be a blessing to the world, to live as God’s faithful people. Relationship always leads to responsibility. The kingdom responsibility is a call to represent the King in the world, a call to join him in restoring it to the way it’s supposed to be.

Throughout the Old Testament we read that human beings have consistently broken the covenant relationship, we read in Romans 3 that the wages of sin are death - the consequences of breaking the covenant is *death*. God says if I am ever to fulfill this desire to be in a covenant relationship with human beings then I will have to be faithful not only to my side of the covenant but also to theirs (because they can’t keep to the covenant on their own). So God fulfills both sides of the God/human covenant.

God’s plan is to send his son Jesus (who is both fully God and fully man) in order that being fully God he keeps God’s side of the covenant – God being faithful to the covenant. In being fully human he is the first human being to keep covenant with God. He is the first human being to be in right relationship with God – *He is the first righteous human being*. Jesus is the first human being not to deserve the consequences of covenant breaking. So Jesus takes our place as the covenant breaker, he bears our sin and shame; he takes our place, the death that we deserve. He dies in our place - Jesus was our substitute. The cross is about a substitutionary death and the victory of God over our enemies.

2 Cor 5:21

Jesus was the only human that didn’t deserve this, but he stood in our place as a sinner so we now share his position as a righteous covenant keeper. Paul’s favourite way of putting this is saying that when we trust Christ we are ‘IN’ Christ. When we trust in him, when we surrender to him, we are placed *in* the one who is the faithful covenant keeper, so we bear his righteousness.

Just to make a note here: Covenant is about being ONE—about being ONE with Jesus. If you are one with Jesus, all that is true of Jesus is true of you. So when you’re reading through the New Testament and it says, “because Jesus was crucified, you have died” —that’s what it means! It means that since you have been gathered into a covenant with God through Jesus, you have become ONE with the Father through Jesus. That means that everything that is appropriated by Jesus is appropriated by you. Everything that is true of Jesus is true of you. Jesus is described as the Son of God, and so because we are in Christ we too share his identity as God’s children.

He became SIN and we become SONS. We become, to God, exactly as Jesus is. So when he looks at you (and I know you don’t believe this and it’s so hard to let it sink in)...when God looks at you, he genuinely looks at you as if it was Jesus. Because you are ONE with him. You are caught up in him. You are in Christ and did it by no effort of your own. Jesus did it all.

So he becomes our substitute, the one who dies on our behalf, who suffers in our place, who takes all of the consequences of sin on our behalf, though he knew no sin. And because he does that for us and because he offers us a covenant relationship, we get the benefit of him taking our place.

In Luke 22:20 we read:

‘In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you”’. So Jesus is saying his blood represents a New Covenant. A new release, a new understanding, a deeper revelation, a fresh start in this covenant relationship that exists between God and human beings.

The New Covenant is simply a deeper, clearer revelation of God’s love for his creation. An invitation to come into relationship with God as your loving Father, who sees you as His beloved child. That covenant relationship has a kingdom responsibility.

In 2 Cor 5:15 we read:

‘And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again’.

If someone has given you their life, the only appropriate response is to give your life in return. So Jesus gave you all of his life, so the only reasonable response is to give all of your life back to him as well. You live for him.

As children of the King, our kingdom responsibility is to represent him in the world in restoring it to the way it was suppose to be.

In 2 Cor 5:18 we read:

‘All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ...(In other words, he made us ONE with himself again in Christ. Christ becomes our substitute...he becomes our representative.) ... and gave us the ministry of reconciliation’.

He gives us exactly the same task that he gave his Son. Why? Because we are his sons and daughters! We get the same job. We get the job that Jesus had. And if you think about it (the depths of this will be explored for eternity), remember, that the world was lost through human sin.

The world was lost. God’s creation was snatched away from human oversight by our own foolishness and the devil took our place as ruler of this world.

But what that means is this: God has committed himself, and limited himself, to win the world back through the same agent that lost it. The agent that lost the world will now be the agent that wins it back again. That’s why Jesus came as a human being.

Authority is about placing ourselves in the right place before God. As we humbly recognize his and our position, he authorizes us to exercise power on his behalf.