

STUDY QUESTIONS – EXPLORING THE INFORMATION (ABOUT 30 MINUTES)

Jesus rejoices that the kingdom of God is hidden “from the wise and learned”, yet revealed “to little children” (v. 21). In verse 26 Jesus says that we should love the Lord “with all your mind”. Spend time exploring the relationship between these two realities. Do they contradict each other? Can they be held together?

Read 1 Cor. 1:27-29. How does this passage relate to the question above? What are the “foolish things” that God uses?

In our journey through Luke’s Gospel we’re part way through the 10th Chapter. If you were to summarize the story up to this point, what would be the ‘headlines’?

Living it out

What would it look like in your situation to...

- Share peace with those you encounter
- Receive hospitality
- Cure the sick
- Announce that ‘the kingdom of God is at hand’

Prayer suggestion:

Spend time praying and commissioning each other in this work. Pray for those finding work/relationships/a situation particularly difficult at this time.

Pray for Christians in parts of the world where to share the gospel is to risk one’s life.

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



Everywhere...in everything

Week beginning: 26th October 2014.

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

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

"The light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it" (John 1: 5) Light a candle (again!) when you eat a meal this week, and thank God for his light, for your home and for your food. Why not take turns to thank God before (or after) you eat your breakfast, lunch or supper?

In

Many children are joining together to celebrate Jesus' light on Friday 31st October at the Light Party. Draw a candle outline and write down the names of some children you know and pray that they will know that Jesus has overcome the darkness.

Out

Is there is a dark place, or a sad situation in your neighbourhood? What could you do to help bring Jesus' light into that place?

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 through His word. You can use these together with our daily prayer diary from the monthly newsheet.

Monday 27th October

Readings: Psalm 98, Philippians 1.1-11. Focus verse: In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, 6 being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

Tuesday 28th October

Readings: Psalm 119.89-96, Philippians 1: 12-30. Focus verse: 21 For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. 22 If I am to go on living in the body, this will mean fruitful labour for me. Yet what shall I choose? I do not know! 23 I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far; 24 but it is more necessary for you that I remain in the body.

Wednesday 29th October.

Readings: Psalm 110, Philippians 2.1-13. Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, 10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Thursday 30th October

Readings: Psalm 113, Philippians 2.14-end Focus verse: 14 Do everything without grumbling or arguing, 15 so that you may become blameless and pure, 'children of God without fault in a warped and crooked generation.' Then you will shine among them like stars in the sky 16 as you hold firmly to the word of life. And then I will be able to boast on the day of Christ that I did not run or labour in vain.

Friday 31st October. Martin Luther

Readings: Psalm 139, Philippians 3.1-4.1 7 Martin Luther said, "I have held many things in my hands, and I have lost them all; but whatever I have placed in God's hands, that I still possess."

Saturday 1st November. All Saints' Day

Readings: Psalm 34.1-10, Matthew 5.1-12. Bring us, O Lord God, at our last awakening into the house and gate of heaven, to enter that gate and dwell in that house, where there shall be no darkness nor dazzling, but one equal light; no noise nor silence, but one equal music; no fears nor hopes, but one equal possession; no ends or beginnings, but one equal eternity; in the habitations of your glory and dominion, world without end..

SUNDAY'S TEACHING: RESOURCES FOR GROUPS OR INDIVIDUALS.

First thoughts:

Last week we asked, "Where is fear holding you back?" Have you been stopped from doing anything by fear this week?

This week's teaching in a nutshell:

The Secret of Happiness. 1 Cor. 1:26-29, Luke 10:17-24

As we return to our focus on the Gospel of Luke, Andy offered a recap of where we're up to in the story. Jesus had sent out the seventy, giving them authority over the power of the enemy. In being sent out they were to...Share peace with those they encountered, Receive hospitality, Cure the sick, Announce that 'the kingdom of God is at hand'.

They return to Jesus to report back... it worked! 'Lord, even the demons submit to us in your name' (v. 17). In doing these things they are making plain Jesus' power over 'the satan'.

As Jesus' kingdom advances, the authority of 'the satan' is undermined. Later in Luke's Gospel, as the story reaches its climax, we will read how 'the satan' is ultimately defeated, in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. In the companion book to Luke's Gospel, The Acts of the Apostles, we observe how in the power of the Holy Spirit the Church are to be agents of this kingdom both locally, regionally, and "to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8). In receiving authority, the followers of Jesus shouldn't rejoice simply in the power they have been given, for this authority isn't an end in itself – it is a sign of God's activity in and concern for his world. Andy used the example of the 'Rattlesnake Church' in America in which v. 19 is taken rather too literally!

Jesus' kingdom is like no other kingdom. It is brought about in strange and beautiful ways. In 1 Cor. 1:27 we read "God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong". Back in Luke 10 we see Jesus praising the Father, because he has "hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children" (v.21). The kingdom of God is not the possession of the super intelligent, or of those who can manipulate, or aggressively dominate. This is not to say that being a Christian is about switching off your brain, for we'll read just a couple of verses later that to love God is to do so "with all your mind" (v. 26). Yet, we see in Jesus' ragtag band of followers that the kingdom of God operates in a radically different way to any other system or organization. **Jesus' kingdom is like no other kingdom.**

Each one of us are being called to be followers of this kingdom, to be agents of Christ, sharing peace with a world that desperately needs it, meeting people where they are and being humble enough to receive hospitality, bringing healing, and announcing that 'the kingdom of God is at hand'. We are commissioned and equipped to do this. So what will that look like in your home? What will it look like at work? What will it look like in your neighbourhood?

In the second part of his sermon, Andy recognized that there is always a danger that we overcomplicate things, or convince ourselves that God would never use someone like me. Andy used an adapted story by Trevor Dennis to encourage us to discover, or rediscover the Lord's embrace of each one of us.