

Study Guide

Reasons to Share
Jesus

*Kingdom
Come*

Term 2, 2025

Welcome

A Living Hope—Rooted in History, Fresh for Today

One of the great joys of being a Christian is knowing that we're part of something much bigger than ourselves. The call to follow Jesus—and to invite others to do the same—is not new. For over two thousand years, across every continent and generation, God has been at work through ordinary people, drawing hearts to Christ and building his kingdom.

This term, we want to be part of that same story.

The *Reasons to Talk about Jesus* Bible studies will ground us in the unchanging truths that fuel gospel conversations. As we reflect on moments in church history—from the boldness of the early church, to the fires of the Reformation, to faithful witness here in Queensland—we'll be reminded that the reasons for sharing Jesus haven't changed. Be encouraged and equipped to speak with confidence, knowing God still uses our words to bring new life.

All of this points us toward *Taste & See*—a key moment in our church's life to invite friends, family, and neighbours to hear the hope of the gospel in a warm and welcoming space. It starts May 18. Maybe you already have someone in mind. Maybe you're still praying for the opportunity. Maybe it's time for you to come and be refreshed yourself. Let's prepare together and step out in faith.

Then in June, *Mission Focus Month* will widen our vision. Each week we'll hear from mission partners near and far, and be stirred to keep playing our part in God's great global work. And as we wrap up our series in 2 Samuel, we'll see again how God's faithfulness shines brightest against the dark backdrop of sin and brokenness—just as it still does today.

Let's pray that this term fans the flame of gospel hope in our hearts and through our lives. What a privilege to be caught up in God's great work—yesterday, today, and into eternity.

With you in Christ,

Russell, Doug, Joel, Chester and John

About Taste & See

(Taken from <http://tasteandsee.org.au>)

Most of us think there must be more to life...
Do you wonder about life, meaning, purpose, hope?
Do you have big questions about God?

Taste & See is an opportunity to explore the timeless, good news of Jesus with friends through a series of meals around the table.

Over four weeks and four different meals, we examine four big ideas about God around the table. Each meal illustrates part of the grand narrative of the bible's storyline. It is an invitation to engage all the senses and experience for yourself the beauty of God's story as we 'eat our way through the bible'. Along the way we tap into questions of meaning, purpose and hope and hear God's generous invitation to *'life to the full'*.

What to expect

Each week, you will enjoy good food, good conversation, and a thought-provoking presentation. There will be opportunities to hear personal faith stories, toss around some big ideas, ask questions, raise doubts, or just quietly listen in. Curiosity is welcomed. Be ready to be surprised, challenged and inspired!

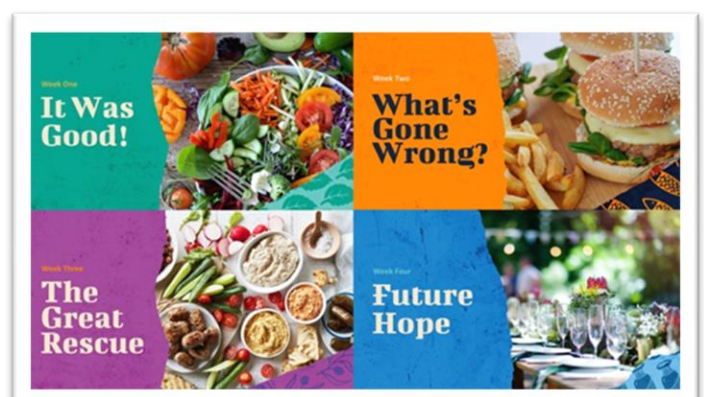
What others have said

"It's given me the opportunity to explore something I feel has been on the back burner in my life for a long time and I'm excited to learn more."

"It helped answer some questions I was too embarrassed to ask"

"It was a relaxed, transparent, open and compassionate space."

"Thank you. Loved it. Taste & See was just what my head, heart and soul needed."



Term 2 Dates (South)

April

22nd Redlands Kids Choir rehearsals commence

May

4th Bring-and-Share Lunch

13th Ladies' Morning Tea

18th Taste & See #1

24th Women's Teaching Day

25th Taste & See #2

June

MISSION FOCUS MONTH

1st A&S Visit - Prayer and Quiz Afternoon

1st Taste & See #3

8th Combined Service (TBC)

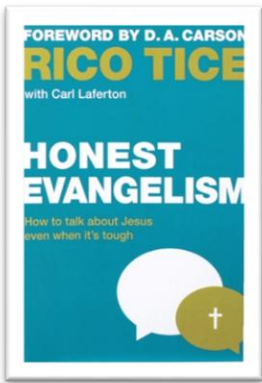
8th Taste & See #4

10th Ladies' Morning Tea

Resources for Talking About Jesus

Looking for help in talking about Jesus?

Books to help you talk



Rico Tice, *Honest Evangelism*.

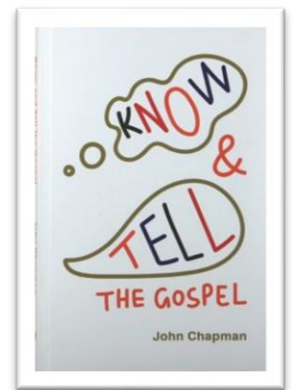
A short but helpful book giving us reason and courage to talk about Jesus with people we love, and with strangers on the street. Rico is honest about what he finds hard, but shares stories of what God does when you keep going anyway.

https://koorong.com/product/honest-evangelism-how-to-talk-about-jesus-even_9781909919396

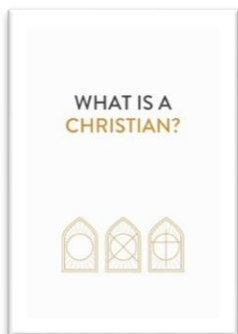
John Chapman, *Know and Tell the Gospel*.

Are you clear what the gospel is? John Chapman is funny and honest, but helps us feel confident with what to say, and bold enough to say it when we feel inadequate.

https://koorong.com/product/know-tell-the-gospel-john-chapman_9781875245734



Books to give away



David Jensen, *What is a Christian?*

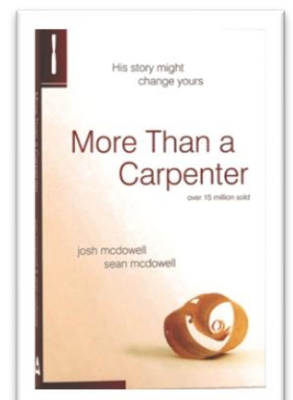
A short book that's cheap for you to buy, it's written for those who want to know more about Jesus.

<https://encministries.org.au/product/what-is-a-christian/>

Josh McDowell, *More Than a Carpenter*.

For anyone who knows something about Jesus, this book answers the most common objections people have to trusting Jesus. From competition with science to the Bible's reliability.

https://koorong.com/product/honest-evangelism-how-to-talk-about-jesus-even_9781909919396



Podcasts for you



Fire Up.

Hear the stories of others sharing their faith, and get the answers you need: How do I get started sharing my faith? How do I answer the tough questions? Short episodes worth listening to

<https://encministries.org.au/ministry/podcasts/>

Speak Life

Seeing the world, with Jesus at the centre. This podcast exists to encourage apologetics and evangelism.

<https://encministries.org.au/product/what-is-a-christian/>



GiST Podcast

Produced by one of our denomination's own committees, the GiST Podcast helps equip you to think Christianly about big issues we're facing in society today.

<https://open.spotify.com/show/6J9WvgyG6wlKQ9sydFcahV?si=e8a2dfb2fb1743a9>

Podcasts for your friend



Discover (previously What is a Christian)

The book *What is a Christian*, as a podcast. 5 short episodes introduce your friend to Jesus.

<https://encministries.org.au/ministry/podcasts/>

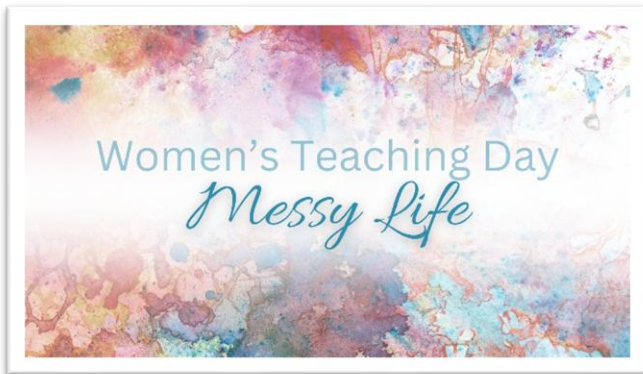
321 Podcast

(<http://321course.com>) is a great video-based course you can share with your friends. And now it's available as a podcast they can listen to.

<https://321.speaklife.org.uk/course/321podcast>



Women's Teaching Day



We're looking forward to this term's Women's Teaching Day on 24th May for the women in our church. This year we have invited Clare Deeves (from WA) to come and speak to us about living our 'Messy Lives' for Jesus. Clare has worked with AFES (the university ministry we support), teaches church history at the

theological college in Perth and runs women's ministry in her local church. Clare will help us to think well about our lives and how we should think about them in light of what God tells us about our world, our Saviour and ourselves. We'll have a practical seminar in the afternoon, with further reflection about how we might take this and put it into practise in our lives.

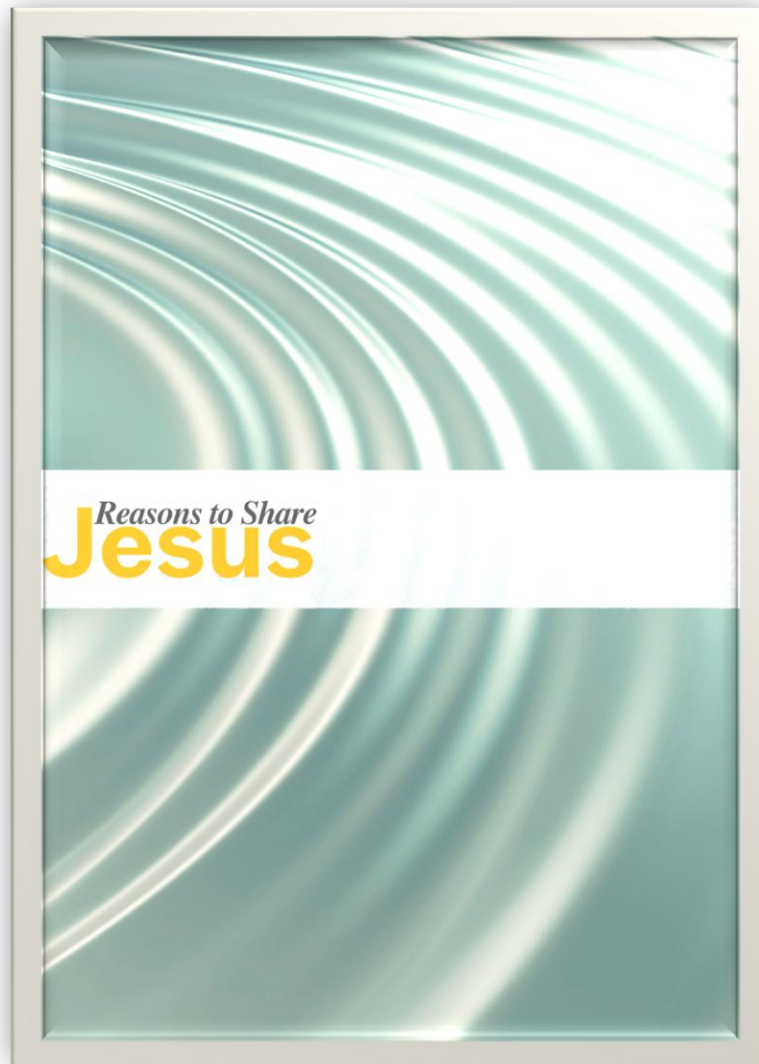
As always, there will be lots of time for fellowship over excellent food. We've invited women from neighbouring churches, so please bring your most welcoming smile and join us for this day. We will start at 9:30 and finish at 3pm. Cost (which will include morning tea and lunch) and other registration details will be available shortly.



If you'd like to be part of making this day happen, please contact jen@redlands.org.au or 0422842202.

STUDIES

Reasons to Share Jesus



Study 1

For the Glory of God - Selina, Countess of Huntingdon



Short Bio

Known as the "Queen of Methodism", Selina Hastings, Countess of Huntingdon, stood alongside preachers such as John Wesley and George Whitefield as one of the most visible leaders of the 18th century evangelical revival. Although small in stature (only 5'6 tall), Selina was a force of incredible energy and industry for the sake of the gospel.

Born in 1707 to Lord Washington Shirley and Lady Mary Shirley, Selina was a child of privilege. Although religious and highly virtuous, these traits initially stood in the way of genuine conversion with Selina resting in the assurance of her own righteousness instead of the righteousness of Jesus. That all changed in 1739 after being impacted by the preaching of George Whitefield.

From this point on, and particularly after the death of husband, Theo Hastings, in 1746, Selina used all the resources of her privilege and wealth in the service of Jesus. She is recorded as saying: "None know how to prize the Saviour, but such as are zealous in pious works for others." Clearly her confidence had shifted away from what she had and achieved to what Jesus has achieved for her.

Over the course of her life, Selina was involved in the partial or full funding of the construction over dozens and dozens of chapels throughout England and Wales. As peeress, Selina was able to appoint evangelical chaplains to these chapels, and later in life established *The Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion*, a society for Calvinistic preachers.

Selina constantly invited members of British nobility to hear Whitefield preach, even having him preach at dinner parties she hosted. This gave Whitefield greater respectability and opened more preaching opportunities for him. Yet her focus wasn't limited on mission in Britain. Selina also supported mission work in the American colonies.

Selina was a Christian philanthropist who used her money and influence to great effect in the cause of Christ. She wasn't motivated by the collection and hoarding of her own assets, but by the glory of God who had saved her.

Read: Psalm 96

1. What does Psalmist call us to praise God for in v1-3? Can you think of any specific events in the Old Testament that the Psalmist might have in mind?
2. What do these events or works of God reveal about who he is (v4-10)?
3. Write a list of who or what are what are called to praise God in the psalm (look particularly at v1,3,7,11,12,13)? What does that teach us about God's goal for creation?
4. How does this psalm help us think about what God's ultimate goal for evangelism is? How might this be a helpful corrective for us when it comes to thinking about evangelism?

Read: Revelation 5:6-14

5. How does this passage fulfill the song of Psalm 96?
6. What does this passage say about the goal of our evangelism?
7. Pastor John Piper once wrote, "Mission exists because worship doesn't." What do you think he means? Do you agree?

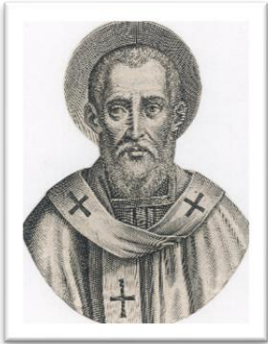
Selina, Countess of Huntingdon, had the means and connections to live a very self-fulfilling life. Yet she sought to fully use her means and connections of the work of the gospel. After her death, Catholic John Henry Newman wrote the following about her:

"She devoted herself, her means, her time, her thoughts, to the cause of Christ. She did not spend her money on herself; she did not allow the homage paid to her rank to remain with herself."

8. Do you think Selina sees evangelism as God centred or man centred? Give reasons for your answer?
9. If evangelism ultimately exists for God's glory, how should that affect the way we think about and write our testimonies? What might be the things to major on and what are the things to minor on?
10. 1 Peter 2:9 describes the church as "...a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light." How can this verse help us reimagine what evangelism is?
11. Do you have people in your life that you think are too difficult to evangelise? How might knowing the ultimate goal of evangelism help you share the gospel with them?

Study 2

For Joy in Jesus - Polycarp



Introduction

Polycarp was a leader in the early church (AD 69-155). He was taught by the Apostle John and was revered by many in the church for his excellent and clear teaching, as well as for his warm pastoral care of God's people. He wrote a letter to the church at Philippi, which is well worth reading and which makes reference to many books that were becoming the New

Testament. Polycarp loved Jesus and found joy in knowing him. He wanted to share that knowledge with others, so they too could have this joy.

He is most famous today for his martyrdom. Polycarp was given the opportunity to escape and rejected it, and even offered food and drink to those who came to arrest him when they arrived at his house. He was dearly loved and well known, and there was an outcry in the city when news of his arrest was made known. Polycarp was fearlessly and faithfully loyal to the Lord Jesus and we will consider his words to the Proconsul later in this study.

Read: 1 Peter 1:1-12

1. Describe the work that God has done to make the people Peter writes to into believers. (1:1-2)
2. What does Jesus' resurrection (in the past) mean for our future? (1:3)
3. How does Peter describe the hope we have? (1:3-5)
4. What might prevent us from being joyful? (1:6)
5. Why are we joyful? (1:6-9)

6. What is the focus of our joy and what it is like? (1:8)
7. Who has been eagerly interested in this salvation we have? (1:10-12)
8. To whom has the salvation in Jesus Christ been revealed? (1:12)

Polycarp was an example of someone who had this 'inexpressible and glorious joy' in the Lord Jesus. When he was given a chance of escaping the pain of martyrdom he responded with these words:

Proconsul: Have respect for your old age; swear by the fortune of Caesar. Reproach Christ and I will set you free.'

Polycarp: 'Eighty and six years I have served him, and He has done me no wrong. How then can I blaspheme my King and Saviour?

Proconsul: I have wild animals here. I will throw you to them if you do not repent.

Polycarp: Call them.

Proconsul: If you despise the animals, I will have you burned.

Polycarp: You threaten me with a fire that burns for a season, and after a little while is quenched; but you are ignorant of the fire of everlasting punishment that is prepared for the wicked. Why are you waiting? Bring on whatever you want. He took off his own clothes and having been bound looked up to heaven and said 'O Lord God Almighty; the Father of your beloved and blessed Son Jesus Christ, I bless you Father, for judging me worthy of this hour, so that in the company of the martyrs I may share the cup of Christ and the resurrection to eternal life, both of soul and body, through the immortality of the Holy Spirit. May I be received this day as an acceptable sacrifice. I bless you and glorify you, along with the everlasting Jesus Christ, your beloved Son. To you, with him, through the Holy Ghost, be glory both now and forever. Amen.

9. Reflecting on Polycarp's last words, what would you say was important to him?
10. How did Polycarp describe his hope (in his prayer)?
11. How would you describe Polycarp's relationship with Jesus? How does this encourage you to live for him in the twenty-first century?
12. What does this 'joy' of knowing Jesus mean for you? How do you think you could grow in this?
13. How are you going spending time with God? This grows your joy! How might you prioritise that more in the coming week?
14. Your non-Christian family member or friend wants to know how you cope with all the 'rules' of your religion. What might you say in light of Peter's letter and Polycarp's example?
15. When you think about the privilege of knowing Jesus, what kinds of things are particularly important for you?
16. Share the names of the people you long to become Christians. How can your group pray for you as you live before them or look for opportunities to speak to them?

Study 3

Because of Where We Are - Mary Goodwin-Robinson



Introduction:

Mary Goodwin Robinson lived in the vicinity of Mackay during the late 1800's to early 1900's. Her husband ran the Meadowlands Sugar Plantation. Women of her class and situation would expect to live a life of luxury in one of the big southern cities, Sydney or Melbourne. However, for whatever reason, Mary lived on the Plantation, and encouraged by

Bishop Selwyn served the South Sea Islanders who worked on the plantation.

Mary taught the children to read and write Pidgin and later after the workday had ended, the adults. (She taught Pidgin as it was more useful than English to the South Sea Islanders when they returned home). She ran the school on the weekends for those who lived further out and organised the attendance of church, Sunday School and catechism and baptism classes on Sunday. Mary also visited the sick, nursed those who were particularly sick in her home, visited the jail and government hospital.

Our records of Mary are patchy. We are not certain how long she did this ministry, but between 1899-1904 a total of 3700 passed through her classes. We do have a letter she wrote when the funding she had been receiving for her mission was unable to continue, and a letter written to her by one of her students. In both, it is clear that Mary was committed to their welfare and particularly cared about their souls. She worked hard in her time and place to enable the people who lived around her to know that Jesus had died for them and that they needed to come to him for salvation.

Mary is an excellent example of someone who did what she could with what she had in the circumstances she found herself. She learned how to 'love her neighbour' by telling them about Jesus and providing for their needs.

Read Philippians 1:12-30

1. Where was Paul when he wrote this letter?
2. How might we expect the Philippian Christians to respond the news that Paul is in jail? How did Paul see his arrest as advancing the gospel? (v12-14)
3. Not only Paul, but others were preaching the gospel at this time. What motivated two groups of those people? (v15-17)
4. How did Paul respond to the news that some were preaching the gospel to get at him? (v18) What perspective on his life and on God's kingdom would Paul need to have this joy?
5. What might Paul have meant by his 'deliverance'? (v19) How do his words in the rest of this paragraph help us to understand what outcome he wanted most from his imprisonment? (v19-26)
6. Paul evidently deeply loved the Philippian Christians. How is that clear in his words about whether he lives or dies?
7. Describe what a Christian would do, say and think if s/he were to fulfill Paul's desire for Christians in verses 27-28.

8. What is Paul's attitude to a Christian facing hard things? (v29-30) How does this help us to live well in this world for Jesus?

Mary Robinson found herself in a time and place, with particular constraints and opportunities, as Paul had done. She wrote to her local Bishop asking for some funding to keep going with her work. This is what it looked like for her to care for the South Sea Islanders that were her neighbours:

"My hours are from 9.30-11.30 a.m. for the South Sea children. Then I arrange School for evening, set copies, etc and then visit the sick. Evening School for adults in from 6.30pm to 9.30 or 10, and then doctoring the "Boys" as I am well acquainted with medicines having learnt for some years from a good doctor. The very sick boys, who come and ask sometimes, I take in and nurse till they are well again.

On Saturdays and Sundays the place is a sight worth seeing, with all the men, women and children all parts, some coming 6, 8, 10, 16 and even 20 miles!

On Sunday morning there is service at 10, after which comes a class for Confirmation candidates, followed by dinner (often then I have to feed some who come from a great distance, and have nowhere to go), so you see expenses are by no means few, but I cannot turn them away, as by this means I frequently gain souls for Christ.

At 2pm comes a class for Baptism candidates, and soon after 3 Sunday School.

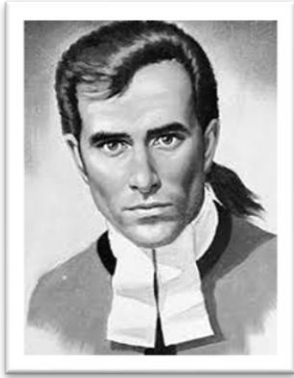
9. What does her schedule tell you about Mary's priorities?

10. In order to care for and speak to the South Sea Islanders, Mary would probably have needed to learn Pidgin (the trade language still spoken on many of the Islands today). Are there people in your life that would take effort to connect with? What kinds of things would you need to do to connect with them?

11. What opportunities might you have in your life to connect with people different to you that you have 'written off' as too complicated or difficult? How would you like to talk to God about that?
12. What kinds of risks can you see lying behind what Mary was trying to do? What kinds of risks do you struggle with or avoid as you think about the opportunities in your life?
13. Who are you praying to have opportunities to share with right now in your life? Share these names with your group and pray some of what Paul wanted prayer for: courage, boldness and faithfulness in life.

Study 4

For the Love of the Lost - David Brainerd



Introduction

David Brainerd (1718-1747) was a missionary to Native American tribes in the American Northeast. He is remembered not only for his evangelistic zeal but also for his deep communion with God and heart-wrenching compassion for those who did not know Christ. Brainerd was expelled from Yale for challenging spiritual apathy, yet he was later supported by Jonathan Edwards, who edited and

published Brainerd's *Diary*, which has since inspired countless missionaries, including William Carey and Jim Elliot.

Brainerd longed deeply for the salvation of others—he often wept and fasted for the conversion of those he served, even amid personal illness, harsh weather, and deep loneliness. His life was short, but his passion for reaching the lost with the gospel endures.

Read: Romans 10:8-17

1. According to Paul, how is someone saved? (vv. 9-10)
2. Who is the gospel message for? What assurance is given in v.13?
3. What four steps are outlined in vv.14-15 that lead someone from ignorance to faith in Christ?
4. What role does preaching (proclamation) play in the salvation of others?

5. Reflect on the urgency behind Paul's words. What do they tell us about God's desire for the lost?

Read: Luke 19:1-10

6. What do we learn about Jesus' heart for the lost in His encounter with Zacchaeus?
7. How does Jesus' willingness to dine with Zacchaeus demonstrate what evangelism often looks like?
8. Verse 10 says Jesus came "to seek and save the lost." How can that become part of your mission, too?

David Brainerd wrote in his diary:

"I cared not where or how I lived, or what hardships I went through, so that I could but gain souls to Christ. While I was asleep, I dreamed of these things, and when I awoke, the first thing I thought of was this great work."

And again:

"Oh, that I were a flame of fire in the service of my God!"

9. What does Brainerd's quote reveal about his view of evangelism?
10. How did Brainerd's willingness to endure hardship reflect his commitment to reaching the lost?

11. How might your life look different if your greatest concern was the salvation of others?
12. What emotions or obstacles do you face when thinking about evangelism? How can Brainerd's example challenge or encourage you?

Further reflection

9. How are you praying for the lost? What practical steps could help you become more consistent in this?
10. Imagine a non-Christian friend asking why you care so much about them becoming a Christian. How might you answer, based on these passages and Brainerd's life?
11. When you think of Jesus' mission "to seek and save the lost," what personal mission or burden begins to stir in you?
12. List the names of people you long to see come to faith in Christ. How can your group support you in praying for them and seeking opportunities to share the gospel with them?

Study 5

Because Judgement is Coming - Hudson Taylor



Short Bio

James Hudson Taylor (1832–1905) was a pioneering British missionary to China and the founder of the China Inland Mission (CIM), a groundbreaking force in 19th-century evangelical outreach. Deeply burdened by the spiritual lostness of millions in China, Taylor dedicated his life to bringing the gospel to those who had never heard the name of Christ.

From a young age, Taylor was influenced by his parents' prayers for China, but it was his personal conversion and later medical training that prepared him for the demanding mission field. In 1854, he arrived in Shanghai but found himself deeply troubled by the cultural gap between Western missionaries and the Chinese people. He began to dress in Chinese clothing, adopt their customs, and live among them—an approach that shocked many Westerners but opened doors to evangelism.

Taylor's motivation for mission was clear: he was gripped by the reality that millions in China were perishing without Christ. In his words, "Can all the Christians in England sit still with folded arms while these multitudes are perishing...?" He believed the judgment of God was real and urgent, and that without the gospel, souls were eternally lost.

This deep conviction led him to found the China Inland Mission in 1865, with a vision to send workers into China's unreached interior provinces. Rejecting the comforts of colonial mission models, CIM operated by faith alone, trusting God for resources without public appeals for money.

By the time of his death, CIM had sent over 800 missionaries, established hundreds of churches, and translated the Scriptures into multiple dialects. Hudson Taylor's legacy endures in the continued work of global missions, grounded in the conviction that Christ's love compels us—and the lost cannot wait.

Read: Acts 17:16-34

1. In v16, Paul is "greatly distressed" when he sees all the idols in Athens. What are some of the reasons seeing these idols made him distressed?
2. What does he begin to do in response to seeing the idols (v17,22)?
3. Look at Paul's sermon in the Areopagus (v22-31). What are themes of the gospel he preaches? How is this different from other sermons in Acts (look at Peter's sermon in 2:17-36 if you need a comparison)?
4. How does Paul conclude his sermon in v31? Why would he introduce the idea of God's judgement here? Who will administer judgement?

Read: 2 Corinthians 5:6-6:2

5. The broader context of these verses is Paul's defence of his ministry. In v9, he says it's "our goal to please [God]". What reason does he give for pleasing God in verse 10?
6. What kind of judgement is Paul talking about in verse 10 given he's a Christian and is no longer under condemnation? How does 1 Corinthians 3:10-15 help us understand what Paul is talking about?

7. How does the fear of the Lord (and his judgement) motivate Paul to persuade others with the gospel in verse 11? Does Paul have in mind God's judgement of his work (as in v 10) or God's judgement of unrepentant sinners (see v19-20 for help)?
8. Broadly then, in what two ways does God's judgement play a part in motivating us to do evangelism.

Hudson Taylor was remarkable in his commitment to bring the gospel to the millions of people in inland China. Not only did he suffer greatly for it – he left the comforts of England and experienced the death of several of his children – he changed the way he lived and looked to win people for Christ. His motivation is captured in these two quotes:

"Can all the Christians in England sit still with folded arms while these multitudes are perishing – perishing for lack of knowledge – for lack of that knowledge which England possesses so richly?"

"Would that God would make hell so real to us that we cannot rest; heaven so real that we must have men there; Christ so real that our supreme motive and aim shall be to make the Man of Sorrows the Man of Joy by the conversion to Him of many concerning whom He prayed, "Father, I long that those whom Thou hast given Me be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory."

9. Do you consider the realities of heaven, hell, and judgement often? If not, why not? Does your answer reveal anything about where the focus of your life is on?

10. There are two aspects to God's judgement that should motivate us in evangelism: (1) he'll judge unrepentant sinners and (2) he'll judge how Christians have used their gifts in the cause of the gospel. Do you tend to think about one of these more than the other? Which one?
11. What would you say to someone who says, "You shouldn't try to frighten people to believe in Jesus with the threat of judgement"? What's helpful about that and what's unhelpful?
12. Hudson Taylor often felt overwhelmed by the scale of the spiritual need in China. How does our knowledge of God and his promises help us when we feel overwhelmed?

STUDIES

Kingdom Come



Study 1

Justice and Mercy

2 Samuel 16:1-19:6

After a number of weeks thinking about evangelism, today's study might seem a sudden shift. Especially for those who have been with us over the last three years and have spent time studying 2 Samuel, it's likely people have a range of emotions.

1. If you've read 2 Samuel before (with us, or somewhere else) what events in the book of 2 Samuel stick your memory? What emotions do you have about finishing it off in these last four studies?
2. Our topic so far this term has been evangelism. Gut reaction: do you think 2 Samuel can help us be better evangelists? How, or why not?

Last year we finished 2 Samuel at chapter 15. After David's kingdom peaked with the ark in Jerusalem and God's promise to build David an unending dynasty, we saw it fall apart through David's sin with Bathsheba, and his family's resulting internal conflict accompanied by David's far-too-passive parenting. Chapter 15 closed with Absalom instigating an insurrection ... against his own father!

David's response to this insurrection plays out in chapter 16 and 17 and often feels confusing. On one hand, he seems to passively accept this as God's plan for him. At other times he seems to be deploying his remaining allies strategically, hoping for a return as king.

One moment that embodies this tension is his response to Shimei, a relative of Saul, who hurls insults at him as he flees Jerusalem. Consider what David says in response to Abishai, one of his commanders:

Read 2 Samuel 16:9-12

3. What reasons does David give for passively accepting this as God's plan?
What reason does he give for still hoping to return as king?

David expresses a strong trust in the God – both in his justice as David experiences consequences for his sin, but also his mercy, in keeping promises he made to David.

Yet behind this theological tension is an even more personal one.

Read 2 Samuel 18:1-18

4. What outcome does David want from this battle with Absalom? What convictions and emotions must be at play in David's heart?
5. What outcome would be best for Israel in your opinion? What would you want to happen for David?

David's response is so understandable. His love for his son is natural. But justice (especially if we remember Absalom's abuse of his sister's suffering, his personal vanity and his deceptive ways of gaining power) demands that David not only defend himself but fight for his people.

6. How does God resolve this tension in our reading? How do you feel about Joab's actions? (Note the opinion of the man who found Absalom, in v13)
7. What does verse 18 reveal about (a) the historicity of these events, (b) Absalom's character, and (c) Absalom's place in God's promise to David (cf 2 Sam 7:16)?

Read 18:31-19:7

8. How does the tension between David's desire for justice and his love for his son play out?

Thinking back, we've seen this problem before for David. His justice is often tainted by his "love" for his children.

9. How have you seen this tension in your own life, and in the life of others, especially as parents?
10. If David's kingship is pointing forward to Jesus', how does the tension between love and justice, mercy and judgement, play out in his life? (Reflect on Matthew 23:37-38 and Romans 3:23-26)
11. Returning to the focus of our term, what wisdom might 2 Samuel 16-19 give us for evangelism?
12. When we have difficult people in our lives, what is the wise way to think of longing for justice, but also sharing God's heart of love? How should this shape our prayers? How should it shape our response to others' actions?

Study 2

The King's Mercy

2 Samuel 19:8-20:26

1. Think of a person in your life who was difficult (maybe a bad neighbour or a difficult in-law). Did you ever tell them about Jesus? Why, or why not?

Absalom is dead. But what will happen to people who were glad to see him go? People like Shimei...

Read 2 Samuel 16:5-8, and then 19:8b-23

2. How does Shimei respond to David's return, and how does David choose to respond to Shimei? Why do you think that is?
3. Who else comes with Shimei? (Does anyone in your home group know the significance of those names?) How might they need to look for David's mercy?

Read 2 Samuel 19:40-20:2

4. Thinking back to verses 9-10, what reasons might the tribes of Israel have for being upset with Judah? What fears might be driving their response?
5. What should they have done, based on David's treatment of Shimei?
6. How does the tribe of Judah compare with David in their response to the tribes of Israel? (As you think about their attitude, look back to verse 11)

As we'll explore in the final two studies, Chapters 21-24 are separate as a section that closes the book. So chapter 20 is the final event in the history of 1-2 Samuel. On one hand, it has this context of David's mercy. Yet there's a sense of déjà vu: again there's civil war over who should be king.

Read 2 Samuel 20:14-23

7. How do you feel about this as the ending of the "story" of Samuel?
8. According to this ending, what is the wise thing to do if you find yourself an enemy of King David (and his descendants)?
9. According to this ending, how should the descendant of David respond?
10. Even though it's a messy ending, how is it preparing God's people for Jesus and how we should respond to him, even if you've rejected him?
(Consider Acts 2:36-41)
11. When you are struggling in life, what things do you turn to for hope/comfort/escape? How are they a betrayal of the trust that Jesus deserves?
12. What makes it hard to come back to Jesus at those times? What things have you found help you come back?
13. Think again of that really difficult person. If you shared Jesus' attitude of mercy, how might you treat them different? What might (appropriately) telling them about Jesus look like?

Study 3

Looking Back Part 1: Evil Must End

2 Samuel 21-22

1. "We should not celebrate the achievements of people in the past if they also committed what we now see were great evils." Do you agree? Why, or why not?

The book of Samuel (1 and 2 Samuel together) is, like many other parts of the Old Testament, the story of a man who is both chosen by God and foundational to the identity of the people of God, and also deeply flawed. Some people have struggled more than others as we've worked through the book. But it is striking that, as we finish this journey, the book recognises this is a problem (just like other parts of the Old Testament).

Most commentaries argue the final chapters of the book of Samuel are a "chiasm". That is, the stories and songs in it have a special structure where the "centre" of the chiasm is the heart of the message. Have a look what they mean:

A - David deals with the consequences of Saul's sin (21:1-14)

B - A celebration of David's mighty warriors (21:15-22)

C - David sings of God working justice through his rule (22:1-51)

C' - David sings of God working justice in his life (23:1-7)

B' - A celebration of David's mighty warriors (23:8-39)

A' - David deals with the consequences of his own sin (24:1-25)

2. Take a moment to consider this structure. Maybe flip through these chapters in your bible. Do you agree? What stands out to you about the structure and what it's emphasising?

In this study we'll focus on the outside layer (A). Next week we'll focus on the centre (C).

Read 2 Samuel 21:1-14

3. Who is the famine affecting, and why is God allowing it to happen?

We have no record of when or why Saul attacked Gibeon, but we can guess it was while he was striving to be "pro-Israel" and maybe even faithful to God. He failed to overcome the Amalekites. Perhaps he thought he would please God by fighting the Gibeonites instead. But...

Read Joshua 9:3-6,14-21

4. Who are the Gibeonites? Why wouldn't they have the right to demand restitution from Saul's family? Why is God angry that Saul attacked them?
5. How do you feel about the consequences of Saul's sin for his family? What is that saying about the consequences of sin being more than individual? What is it saying about the cost of putting sin right?
6. The Gibeonites can't achieve justice, so the king must seek justice for them. What is that saying about the role of David as king? How effective do you think David is at bringing justice?

In chapter 24 there is something similar. This time it's David's sin. But again, his sins have consequences for the whole nation. And David recognises he must intercede for the people.

Read 2 Samuel 24:15-25

7. The threshing floor of Araunah is the future site of God's Temple, built by David and his son Solomon. How is this event a pre-cursor to the importance of the Temple? What role does the king have in dealing with sin for his people?

As king, David is responsible for interceding with God as an agent of justice. But he's not good at it.

8. How is that typical of the problems with Saul and David's rules in 2 Samuel? How is the relationship of sin and the king in Israel a challenge, and how does it offer hope?
9. Jesus arrives to declare "The Kingdom of God is near! Repent and believe the gospel." (Mark 1:15) How does this make even more sense with 2 Samuel in the background?
10. Jesus is clearly a better king. What do you love about Jesus being king, compared to David?
11. Jesus comes to bring an end to sin. How would you explain that to someone you love who doesn't know Jesus?

Study 4

Looking Back Part 2: God Will Win

2 Samuel 23-24

At the heart of this ending to 2 Samuel is two heartfelt songs. Let's read the shorter one.

Read 2 Samuel 23:1-7

1. What does David emphasise about himself, and how does he avoid making it sound proud?
2. What is the mandate David is leaving for his descendants – how must they rule, and why?

Recall that the book of Samuel started with Hannah's song.

Read 1 Samuel 2:1-10

3. What differences do you notice? (Compare also with 2 Samuel 22:47-51.) What has changed in Israel since Hannah's days? What has remained the same?

Overall, it's good that Israel now has a king that God has chosen. And that's what David celebrates in 2 Samuel 22.

Read 22:8-16

4. What events in David's rule do you think he is describing? In what way is there a gap between his description and reality?

5. David uses exaggerated language to describe God's deliverance. How does that appropriately capture the spiritual significance of his earthly experience? For comparison, consider how Paul describes Christian living in Ephesians 6:10-20
6. While David has not always been a good and just king, God has consistently rescued and honoured David. If you are now a member of God's kingdom, how does that encourage you?
7. Look back at 2 Samuel 23:1-16 and consider how it applies to Jesus. How does it offer you and I security despite our past, and even future, sin?
8. Our lives are full of opponents and challenges. Share struggles you are facing now. What will it look like to trust Jesus to deliver and bring justice in those situations
9. God's most powerful way of delivering us from evil is that he turns us from being enemies into friends. Pray for people you know who are currently his enemies, that they might become friends.