

SYLLABUS

ENCOUNTER

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MEMORY VERSES

Romans 3:10

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Romans 10:9-10

Romans 5:1-2

INTRODUCTION

MEETING THOSE WHO ENCOUNTERED JESUS AND HOW HE CHANGES THEIR LIVES.

This Scripture programme is about discovering who Jesus is and how he offered to change people's lives only for the good. We have designed this course to enable your BB Company to challenge the boys as to who Jesus is and what he came to do.

We have made the course evangelistic in nature but as we are taught in 2 Timothy 3:16-17, **All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.**

We see this as also good teaching material for those boys who have made a commitment to Jesus in their lives.

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May God bless you as you teach the 'Encounter' lessons to the boys in your Company during this session. It has been a point of prayer for us as committee that, as we have prepared these lessons, the Holy Spirit will be preparing the hearts of the boys to respond. Also, that as you teach this

material that they will encounter Jesus in a personal way and that they will accept the gift of salvation.

It is also our prayer that for those boys who are Christians that they will grow deeper in their relationship with their Lord and Master, Jesus Christ. That indeed you will learn more about Jesus and pass this on to those under your care and that you will know the blessing of being able to share the truth of His word.

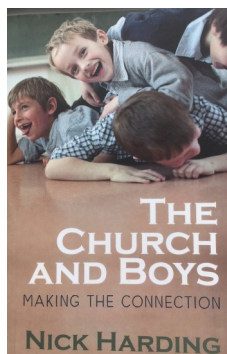
Can we also encourage you to read in preparation for delivering the Scripture programme the Nick Harding book, '**The Church and Boys**' and specifically chapter 7, Boys and the Bible.

Rev Jonathan Moxen

Christian Education & Church Relations Committee
The Boys' Brigade NI District

Please note that all Bible references have been taken from the English Standard Version, ESV.

Extra Resources



The Church and Boys
Nick Harding
RRP £8.99

Available directly from the publisher, The Bible Reading Fellowship (BRF)
brfonline.org.uk

Also available on Amazon and from local Christian bookshops.

1. I THOUGHT I KNEW WHAT LOVE IS, BUT JESUS ...



The Big Idea

Understanding that true fulfilment is found in having a right relationship with God through trusting in who Jesus is and what Jesus has done to reconcile us to God.



The Word

John 4:4-30 & 39-42



Introduction

Our society considers:

- those who have a saving relationship with God to be on the wrong side of history, or weird, or dangerous, or all of these things or something else negative;
- meaningful relationships with other people we encounter in our daily life to be unnecessary because we can interact digitally with so many people via social media;
- that we can have whatever sort of sexual relationship we prefer with whoever we want to and for however long we decide it should last.

The Bible considers all of these relationships in a much better way.



Lesson

Strict Jews hated the people who lived in the region of Samaria so much that they were prepared to go around it rather than go through it when they had a journey to make. However, Jesus chose to go through Samaria because He wanted to meet a particular woman beside a well and change her life for ever.

Jesus arrived in the Samaritan town of Sychar about noon (v5-6). He was tired and thirsty so He sat down by the well. A Samaritan woman arrived at the well and she was probably surprised to find someone

there at that time of day because she most likely chose to come at noon to avoid people.

She was even more surprised when Jesus asked her for a drink (v9). Jewish religious leaders rarely spoke with women in public and they definitely didn't interact with Samaritans! However, Jesus wasn't interested in cultural traditions or in petty religious squabbles; He wanted to speak to this woman about much more important matters.

Jesus told the women that He could give her living water which would result in her having eternal life (v10 & 13-15). However, the woman didn't understand that Jesus was using water as a picture for salvation, she thought that He was just talking about ordinary water (v11-12 & 15). Although she realised how important ordinary water was for her physical life, she hadn't grasped how important the salvation Jesus was offering her was for her spiritual life.

Up to this point in her life, the woman had tried to find satisfaction in the wrong things and Jesus went on to reveal this to her by asking her to call her husband and come back (v16). When she replied that she had no husband, Jesus was able to tell her that she had five ex-husbands and was currently with a man who wasn't her husband (v17-18). Jesus could do this because He is God and knows all things. We can only imagine how freaked out the women must have been by a stranger knowing so much about her.

Notice, Jesus didn't ignore this woman's sin, nor did He reject her for all the wrong things she had done. Other Jews would

have despised this woman because she was an immoral Samaritan woman, but Jesus saw her as a lost soul who needed a Saviour.

Even though Jesus gently exposed the sin in this woman's life, it caused her to become so uncomfortable that she attempted to change the conversation to where the right place to worship God was (v20). However, Jesus brought her back to the correct way to worship God (v24).

The woman tried to close down the conversation by telling Jesus that when the Messiah came He would make everything clear (v25). So, Jesus revealed to her that He was the Messiah she claimed to be waiting for (v26).

This caused the woman to leave her water jar at the well, go back to the town and invite the people she used to try to avoid to come out to meet Jesus (v28-29). The result was that many of them joined her in believing that Jesus is the Saviour they needed (v39 & 42).



Application

Pure water is the best thing to satisfy our physical thirst. Thirsting for the wrong things ruins our relationship with God and with other people.

Where are you looking for satisfaction? Is it in your possessions, or your friends (physical or digital), or your interests, or your achievements or something else? Have you realised that only Jesus can truly satisfy our thirst for contentment?

Are there sinful habits that you need to leave behind?

Please understand that God will accept you if you ask Him to forgive you for looking for satisfaction in the wrong things, and you believe that Jesus died to take the punishment for all the sins you commit.

2. I THOUGHT I WAS STRONG, BUT JESUS ...



The Big Idea

Understanding that we can't stand up for our faith in Jesus or live in obedience to Him in our own strength. We need to rely on the power of the Holy Spirit to do these things.



The Word

Mark 14:27-72



Introduction

What are your strengths? What are your weaknesses (or areas for development)?

As we grow taller, stronger, and wiser (hopefully!) throughout our teens and twenties, we can start to think that we're invincible physically, mentally and spiritually.



Lesson

The night before Jesus was crucified He celebrated the Passover meal with His disciples and transformed it into what we now call the Lord's Supper or Communion (Mark 14:12-25).

On their way from the upper room to the Mount of Olives, Jesus told His disciples that they would all desert Him (v27). Peter, who was renowned at this stage for speaking before thinking, said that even if everybody else forsook Jesus, he wouldn't (v29). However, Jesus informed Peter that before the rooster crowed twice that night he would have denied even knowing Jesus three times (v30). Peter's response was that he would die with Jesus before he would deny Him (v31).

When they reached a place called Gethsemane, Jesus wanted Peter, James

and John closest to Him while He was praying. When Jesus came back to where they were, He found them asleep, and He specifically told Peter to watch and pray so that he wouldn't enter into temptation (v38). However, when Jesus came back to them on two further occasions He found them sleeping again.

Judas led a crowd from the Jewish religious leaders to where Jesus was and identified Jesus to them with a kiss (v43-45). They took Jesus to the high priest and Peter followed them into the courtyard of the high priest's house.

When one of high priest's servant girls saw Peter warming himself by the fire, she looked at him and said, 'You were with the Nazarene Jesus'. Peter denied it, saying, 'I don't understand what you're talking

about'. As Peter went out into the gateway of the courtyard, the rooster crowed for the first time (v66-68).

The servant girl saw Peter again and told those standing around that Peter was one of Jesus' disciples. He denied it once more (v69-70a).

After a little while the bystanders said to Peter, 'You are one of Jesus' disciples, because you're from Galilee'. Peter called down a curse upon himself and he swore to them, 'I don't know this man you're talking about.'

Immediately the cock crowed for a second time and Peter remembered how Jesus had

told him that he would deny knowing Jesus three times before the cock crows twice. At this Peter broke down and wept.

If this is how the story of Peter finished it would be tragic. However, in John 21:15-17 we read about Jesus restoring Peter to His service by asking him three times, 'Do you love me?' To which Peter replied, 'You know that I love you'.

In the book of Acts we see that Peter is one of the leaders of the early church. For example, when he preached in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost, God used his sermon to save about three thousand people (Acts 2:14-41).



Application

Why do Christians sometimes deny being one? (To avoid getting a hard time, to fit in with a group they want to be a part of?)

If you're a Christian, have you ever denied being one? (Good for leaders to share if they've ever denied being a Christian.)

When are you most tempted to deny being a Christian?

The good news is that Jesus doesn't give up on His followers when they let Him down by denying they're a Christian with their words or their actions.

If we confess our failure and we express our love for Jesus because of all that He has done to purchase our salvation, then Jesus will forgive us and use us again.

Jesus doesn't expect us to be invincible

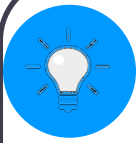
physically, mentally or spiritually. Jesus doesn't expect us to serve Him or obey His commandments by just relying on our own resources.

Jesus wants us to continually depend on the Holy Spirit through prayer to enable us to do these things - we can pray anywhere and at anytime. Peter didn't pray in the Garden of Gethsemane, so he wasn't able to cope when the pressure was put on him at the high priest's house.

We are also strengthened to serve Jesus through studying the Bible because we progressively learn more about who God is and how He wants us to live.

Another source of strength is Christian friends who are fighting the same battle we are.

3. I THOUGHT I LOVED GOD, BUT JESUS ...



The Big Idea

Even a hate-filled persecutor of Christians can be transformed into a Christian missionary through an encounter with Jesus.



The Word

Acts 22:3-21



Introduction

Using the word 'PERSECUTE' ask the boys to make up as many words from these letters as they can. (You could give a small prize for the winner.) Make sure they understand what the word means and introduce Paul as one of the first persecutors of Christians.

Context

Paul is now a committed Christian, having travelled widely on missionary journeys to preach the Gospel and urge people to surrender their lives to Jesus, as Saviour and Lord. However, as often happens even today,

preachers can be misunderstood or misinterpreted and as a result have to face hostility. In Jerusalem, Paul faced such hostility from his own people, the Jews. They stirred up a riot in which Paul was physically attacked. The Roman commander intervened by ordering Paul's arrest. Paul asked the commander for permission to speak to the hostile crowd. This permission was granted and it was at this point and in a hostile atmosphere in Jerusalem that Paul gave his testimony.



Lesson

Using 4 words from 'PERSECUTE' as headings, trace the story of Paul's encounter with Jesus.

Pure (v3)

Paul (Saul) was brought up in a very strict Jewish home. His parents taught him about God and how to lead a pure life, living for God and obeying His laws. He was sent to school with one of the leading rabbis at the time, Gamaliel. As a student of God's Word from his earliest days, Paul knew God was

going to send the Messiah to save people from their sins. As a young man he tried very hard to be pure - so much so that he became a Pharisee. Pharisees were very serious about leading a pure life and ensuring others did too.

Upset (v4-5)

Paul was angered about followers of Jesus Christ who were openly saying that Jesus was the Messiah. Many people were believing this and converting to this new faith of

Christianity. He was especially angry that these Christians were saying that religious people, like him, were responsible for the death of the Messiah! To him this was ridiculous. In his anger he caused great upset to many Christians, having them beaten, imprisoned and even playing a part in the stoning to death of Stephen, the first Christian martyr (Acts 8:1). Paul sincerely thought he was doing the right thing out of love for God.

Rescue (v6-13)

Salvation is about Jesus' rescue of lives gone wrong. Even religious people can be misled. Being a true follower of God means surrender of our lives to Jesus as Saviour (Rescuer). Religious activity such as going to church, reading our Bibles, even being kind or doing good works, does not mean we

have a true relationship with God. Paul didn't have this relationship with God until he met Jesus on the road to Damascus where he was going to persecute yet more Christians. He thought he was acting for God but he discovered he had been acting against Him.

Reset (v14-21)

Blinded, Paul had to be led into Damascus, which must have been a very humbling experience for someone like him. However, God had big plans for Paul. Through the ministry of Ananias, who was very frightened of Paul himself, God revealed to him that his life was now reset to a different trajectory. Even though Paul had fought against God, God showed immense grace and forgiveness to him and made him one of the greatest Christian missionaries the world has ever known.



Application

- God used Paul's early education and life experience to make him a great teacher. What experiences might God be using in your life that He may want to use for His purposes?
- What could God do through you if you responded to Jesus as Paul did? Could God reach multitudes of non-Christian people through you?
- God showed grace (undeserved kindness) to Paul. Ananias was unsure about him. How difficult is it to obey God when we're feeling frightened or unsure?



For a modern-day story of persecuted Christians you could use some information from Open Doors. Open Doors works in over 60 countries supplying Bibles, training church leaders, providing practical support and emergency relief and supporting Christians who suffer for their faith. In the UK and Ireland, Open Doors works to raise awareness of global persecution, mobilising prayer, support and action among Christians.

Visit: www.opendoorsuk.org

Open Doors has a focused youth resources website which has a wealth of resources to use with young people. Why not have a BB night themed around persecution using the youth resources?

Visit: www.opendoorsyouth.org

4. I THOUGHT I MAY BE WASTEFUL, BUT JESUS ...



The Big Idea

Mary is reassured in her encounters with Jesus that nothing is ever wasted on Him, especially a life devoted to Him.



The Word

John 11 (esp. 28 - 33)

John 12:1-8 (Lesson)

Luke 10: 38-42



Introduction

Based on the popular game 'Pictionary', in teams, ask the group to draw some key words from the three stories of Mary's encounters with Jesus, eg an ear; grave; tears; feet; food; perfume.

Mary of Bethany appears three times in the Gospels. She is one of the most beautiful examples of someone who loves and trusts Jesus unashamedly and seemingly oblivious to the criticism of others. Twice Jesus speaks

in her defence to correct her critics, "Mary has chosen what is better", He said in Luke 10. 'Choosing what is better' is a theme in Mary's life. Three times we find her at the feet of Jesus: learning from Him, seeking comfort from Him and worshipping Him. Mary, her sister Martha and brother Lazarus were from Bethany, a small town on the outskirts of Jerusalem. This family were great friends of Jesus. It seems He was quite regularly in their company.



Lesson

Wasted Time?

This is the same Mary whose story is covered in lesson number 7. Suffice to say at this stage, that in contrast to her busy sister, Martha, she sat at the feet of Jesus listening to Him. Jesus did not consider this a waste of time. He said, "Mary has chosen what is better."

Jesus wants the attention of our hearts, rather than our grumbling service."

Wasted Faith?

John 11:28-37

The second time we meet Mary is on a very sad occasion - the death of her brother, Lazarus. Understandably both sisters are very upset. Friends and neighbours have come to comfort them but Mary is confused. She had sent for Jesus to come before Lazarus died, but Jesus had delayed. She had placed her trust in Jesus yet He let the worst thing

happen: “Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died.”

Nevertheless, she runs and falls at the feet of the great comforter. Even though she doesn’t understand and is unable to see the purpose in it all, she still trusts Him. Others criticise and say such faith is a waste (v37), but Jesus showed that He is Lord of both the living and the dead as He raised her deceased brother to life again.

Christians are not immune from sadness and loss just because they are people of faith. At times of great pain the temptation is to turn away from God. He appears to have let us down. Mary chose to run towards Jesus and find in Him the comfort that can be found nowhere else.

Wasted Money?

John 12:1-8

Just days before His crucifixion Mary was again in Jesus’ company at another meal prepared by her sister, Martha. This time Mary did something which was socially

embarrassing, even inappropriate. She poured a jar of perfume (which cost about one year’s wages) all over the feet of Jesus and then wiped them with her hair. (Women would never have let their hair down publicly in that culture!)

Again, she was criticised for being wasteful. This time over money. It was said the money would have been better spent caring for the poor, but Jesus spoke in her defence (v7 & 8). There would be other opportunities to give to the poor, He said, but there would never be the same opportunity to anoint Him for burial. (Anointing bodies was part of the ceremonial care of a person’s body before it was buried.)

Mary’s extravagance was not a waste of money after all, but a beautiful act of devotion.



Application

- Mary was constantly criticised about her devotion to Jesus, yet she was never defensive and never gave up. How do you respond if criticised or mocked by your peers because of your love for Jesus? Do you jump quickly to justify yourself? How might we be more resilient like Mary?
- In what ways could we show extravagant love for Jesus today? Would the possibility of criticism or misunderstanding cause you to hesitate?

5. I THOUGHT IT WAS TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE, BUT JESUS...



The Big Idea

Understanding that the truth of Jesus' resurrection is foundational to the Christian faith.



The Word

John 20:19-31



Introduction

Have you ever been taken in by an April Fool? Have you ever believed a piece of fake news?

Unfortunately, there's so much fake news around these days, it's hard to spot when something is obviously not true.

What about the account of Jesus' resurrection? Is it just a piece of fake news? Or is it actually true? Tim Keller, a Minister in America says, 'If Jesus rose from the dead,

then you have to accept all that He said; [but] if He didn't rise from the dead then why worry about any of what He said? The issue on which everything hangs is not whether or not you like [Jesus'] teaching but whether or not He rose from the dead.'

We're going to examine the accounts of two of Jesus' appearances to His disciples after His resurrection.



Lesson

Jesus was crucified on a Friday but on the Sunday morning, when a group of ladies went to the tomb where Jesus' body had been put, it was empty and an angel told them that Jesus had been raised back to life. So, the ladies took this wonderful news to Jesus' disciples and Peter and John ran to the tomb to check for themselves that what the ladies had told them was true.

Like a hunter returning triumphantly from the cave of a dangerous beast he'd just killed, Jesus returned from the grave to demonstrate that He'd defeated sin and death.

We've just read in John 20 how, later that day, Jesus came to the house where His frightened disciples were hiding. Jesus showed them the wounds in His hands and side to prove that it was indeed Him. Jesus told His disciples that He wanted them to go and tell others about how He'd lived, died and rose again, so that their sin could be forgiven.

One of Jesus' disciples, Thomas, wasn't there that evening. When the other disciples told Thomas that they had seen Jesus, Thomas said, "**Unless I see the nail marks in His hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe**" (v25). Thomas wouldn't believe that

Jesus had been raised back to life, when his friends shared this wonderful news with him.

We're told that one week later Jesus came back to the house to see His disciples again (v26). This time, Thomas was there. Jesus said to Thomas, "**Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe**" (v27). At this point, Thomas believed that Jesus had lived, died, and rose again to rescue him from his sin. So, Thomas said to Jesus, "**My Lord and my God!**"

Jesus then said to Thomas, "**Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed**" (v29). To believe means to trust in. All of you are trusting at this very moment, because you believe that the seat you're sitting on is able to support you, or else you wouldn't be sitting on it.

It's vitally important that we also trust in Jesus. It's not enough for us to just know about Jesus and what He did while He was

here on earth. It's not even enough for us to know that Jesus lived, died and rose again so that people's sin could be forgiven. We must personally believe that Jesus had to live, die, and rise again so that our sin could be forgiven. We must personally believe that Jesus is the only way that we can be made right with God.

When we believe this, then we'll ask God to forgive our sin and we'll trust completely and exclusively in Jesus to be our God and our Lord, just like Thomas eventually did. When we tell God that we're truly sorry for all the sins we've committed, God declares us to be no longer guilty of those sins and He declares us to be as perfect in His sight as Jesus is.

However, everyone who trusts in Jesus must turn away from their sin – this is what repentance means. Left to ourselves, we wouldn't have the power to resist sin. Thankfully, God gives every believer the gift of His Holy Spirit, just like we saw Him giving the Holy Spirit to His disciples in verse 22.



Application

Thomas originally thought that the reports of Jesus' resurrection were just fake news. However, Jesus convinced Him that they were true.

Alistair Begg, who is a Minister in America, says, 'Belief in Jesus and in the resurrection is a matter of faith, but it is not a leap in the dark. It is based on evidence that is powerfully persuasive.'

After Jesus ascended back to Heaven, His disciples, including Thomas, took the news of their risen Saviour to the ends of known world at that time. This cost some of them their lives. People don't die for what they know is untrue. If the disciples had just

invented the resurrection, they wouldn't have given up their lives for a lie.

Further evidence for the resurrection is that:

- Jesus' enemies weren't able to produce His body to disprove the resurrection.
- Jesus didn't just appear to His closest disciples after His resurrection, He appeared to over 500 other people.

Are you convinced by the evidence that Jesus rose from the dead?

Are you willing to trust Him to be your Saviour, and live with Him as your Lord?

6. I THOUGHT STUFF WOULD SATISFY, BUT JESUS ...



The Big Idea

Trying to do all the right things will not bring a fulfilled life, but only in Jesus do we have a life that will satisfy.



The Word

Luke 18:18-30



Introduction

How high on a scale of 1-10 do you value other peoples opinion?

What do you think 'to be accepted' means?

What kinds of things do people do to be accepted by others?

Have you ever said or done something that makes you more acceptable to other people?

Have you ever lied so that people like you? eg A score in a test, your football team, what you like or dislike.



Lesson

This man had everything going for him, he had his own wealth somehow acquired from somewhere and he had the respect of others because he held a ruling office maybe in one of the local courts. He had manners and morals; he bowed at Jesus feet and had some idea of who Jesus was. He was what we would call a dead on guy with the right attitude. Jesus saw all these qualities. Yet this is one of the saddest passages in the whole of the gospels, for at the end there is little hope for this young man that had so much potential. Jesus knew there was something very wrong with this young man's approach on how to get to heaven.

This question the young man comes with in v18 was the right one to ask by anyone wanting to have eternal life. With all these right moves why did Jesus not just tell him to trust in him or he needed to be born again like he did to Nicodemus? What does Jesus do in v19? He asks a question knowing rightly what the young man will reply and in v20 He points to the Law. Now the problem was if you broke one single Law then you have broken it all. If a person could keep the whole of the Law, every little tiny bit, they would be perfect and sinless and would go to heaven.

That is what this young man had to achieve to gain eternal life and because he thought he

had never even broken the law, maybe he thought he would be ok. That is what he was saying by the response to Jesus in v21. **‘All these I have kept since I was a boy,’ he said.** He believed in his own mind. In other words, “I look at myself and I do not see any sin. If I need eternal life it is not because of my sin.” He had no idea how far he had fallen short of God's standard. In Mark's account we see at this point that Jesus looks at this young man and it says He loved him.

Jesus' love for this man was a mixed show of compassion and pity. For Jesus saw that this man with so much going for him - his youth, his riches, his abilities, his responsibilities - was blind to his own sinfulness, but He knew he needed something.

Finally Jesus gave the rich young man the ultimate command in v22 **“When Jesus heard this, he said to him, ‘You still lack one thing. Sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.’”**

Jesus was giving the man the opportunity, that after you have faced your sinfulness then you can follow me. This man had said he had kept all the law, now Jesus was testing this claim. He was saying, "alright, you think you love your neighbour as yourself; okay give him everything you have got, then follow me." Jesus had touched the very centre of this man's existence, his love of money. Jesus was saying that unless I can be the highest authority in your life then there is no salvation for you.



Application

- 1 There is only one way to get to heaven and that is through Jesus. We can only truly trust Jesus whenever we trust him with everything.
- 2 We can only come to Jesus when we see we need to trust him. That means seeing that we are self-centred and selfish and that our lives are often driven by just pleasing other people and not God, indeed what the Bible calls sinful. Romans 3:10 “As it is written, ‘There is no one righteous, not even one’ ”.
- 3 That God's loves us and because of His love for us He sent Jesus to die for our sin: Romans 5:8, “But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”
- 4 That it is incredibly simple that we need to ask for forgiveness and trust in Jesus as our Saviour and Lord: “If you declare with your mouth, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved.” Romans 10:9-10
- 5 When we know Jesus' forgiveness that the Holy Spirit comes to live within us and we have new life in Christ. “Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand.” Romans 5:1-2

7. I THOUGHT I NEEDED TO DO THINGS, BUT JESUS ...



The Big Idea

I thought Jesus wanted me to do things, but Jesus taught me a better way.



The Word

Luke 10:38-42 (Lesson)

John 11 & 2 Peter 3:18



Introduction

Imagine a school teacher tells you to do less work, less revision, less homework?

“You’re working far too hard, John. You’re worrying too much about insignificant issues! Just listen to my teaching; try to learn what I’m instructing you - and you’ll be fine!”

This possibly sounds like strange advice. Is not the best way to succeed, the best way to attain good examination results, to work as much as you can?

Discuss the idea that “Less is sometimes more” in relation to achieving academic success and success in other areas such as sport, music etc.

In God’s kingdom the directive to work less and listen more is essentially what the master teacher, Jesus Christ tells his beloved pupil, Martha in Luke 10. Martha earnestly believes she should work as hard as possible to please Jesus. She thinks the best course of action for a follower of Jesus is to busy oneself serving. However, in this illuminating encounter, Martha is taught something quite extraordinary. Jesus teaches there is a better thing to bustling busyness - this is to wait quietly on the Lord. The disciple’s number one priority is not to work harder but to sit at the feet of the master, listen to His word and learn! This is how those who have been saved by grace will grow in grace! Jesus instructs us that less is sometimes more!



Lesson

Martha’s encounter with Jesus teaches that less is sometimes more. John 11 reveals a few details which help paint a fuller picture of the encounter in Luke 10:38-42. Martha, Mary and their brother Lazarus, shared a special friendship with the Lord Jesus. They lived in a village called Bethany and Martha was likely the elder of the two sisters.

Martha welcomed Jesus into her house and immediately began to play the busy host making temporal provisions for the Master.

Note three key things from the text:

- Mary’s devotion to Christ’s teaching.
- Martha’s distraction by other things.
- Jesus’ directive to choose “the good portion”.

Mary's Devotion

Mary "sat at the Lord's feet and listened to His teaching!" v39.

Two sisters were treated to a personal encounter with the greatest teacher ever to have walked this scene of time. Mary seized the opportunity to fully avail of His teaching. Jesus referred to her choice in v42 as the "good portion". This was the better choice. Having been saved by grace, Mary desired to grow in grace. Soul business was her first business. She was single minded, totally focused on the things that matter most: being instructed in the things of God. She put the teaching of Matthew 6:33 into practice.

Martha's Distraction

Martha, like her sister Mary, was a follower of Jesus, but one who did not get her priorities in order. She was more concerned with busyness, with doing things which in themselves were not wrong, but which distracted her from that which is better.

Read v40, "But Martha was distracted with much serving." She felt hard done by that her sister Mary left her to serve alone and complained to Jesus about this.

Underline the point that Martha was doing something good – serving Jesus- but Jesus taught her there is something more important. His followers must listen to His teaching if they are to be growing disciples.

Jesus' Directive

The directive given to Martha is very clear. It is a rebuke for believers who get their priorities mixed up: Jesus the wise physician sees Martha's disease and immediately applies the remedy:

Read v41-42, "Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things, but one thing is necessary. Mary has chosen the good portion, which will not be taken away from her."



Application

- 1 Read 2 Peter 3:18a. "But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

Discuss: How can you be devoted to Christ's teaching? How can boys focus on that which is better? How can they grow as followers of Jesus?

Suggestions: Attentive listening in BB Bible Class; commitment to regular church attendance where they can be taught the Word of God; join their Church Youth Fellowship; attend the school SU; listen attentively to faithful Biblical instruction as much as possible; make a daily quiet time where they read God's Word and prayer a priority.

- 2 How can young people today become distracted by things which are not necessarily bad in themselves?

Suggestions: A part time job where you choose to work on a Sunday can prevent boys from attending Church, Sunday School, Youth Fellowship etc. Encourage boys to avoid such a choice. Sport & leisure activities, study, music lessons, even serving as part of DofE can take priority over how boys spend their time. Many good things can distract them from "sitting at the Lord's feet and listening to His teaching."

- 3 Encourage the boys to make wise choices: to choose "the good portion". Read Matthew 6:33: "But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you."

8. I THOUGHT I UNDERSTOOD WHO GOD WAS, BUT JESUS ...



The Big Idea

I thought I knew God, but Jesus taught me I needed to be born again.



The Word

John 3:1-15 (Lesson) John 1:11-13
Romans 3:10; 23 Ezekiel 36:25-27
Numbers 21:5-10



Introduction

Many people think they know a subject matter very well, only to be instructed by a well-informed teacher who highlights gaps in their knowledge .

Ask: Have any of the boys, for example, ever arrived for a school examination feeling very confident, only to find that the questions on the exam paper were way beyond their level of understanding? Was it their fault for not revising thoroughly or the fault of a teacher for not preparing them properly?

Think through how some older boys may sit the Driving Theory Test and fall short due to lack of knowledge/ poor preparation.

Also discuss how over-confidence amongst boys can cause them to fail the Driving Test itself.

Discuss with the boys other potential situations where a lack of understanding may be exposed. You could share an illustration from personal experience or ask the boys if they would like to share an incident in their own experience.



Lesson

Nicodemus' encounter with Jesus teaches that his great need was to be born again. Nicodemus was a Pharisee, a member of the Sanhedrin (Jewish ruling council). He would therefore have been well acquainted with the Old Testament Scriptures and he seemed to be intrigued by Jesus and His teaching. The term "Rabbi" (v2) was a sign of respect. Such respect led Nicodemus to come to Jesus "by night" to find out more. The term "by night" suggests at least a couple of things:

- Nicodemus didn't want others to know he

was interested in Jesus and His teaching.

- In John's Gospel the term "by night" symbolizes spiritual darkness. Although well informed, Nicodemus was still spiritually blind to who Jesus really was. (Romans 3:10 & 23) Rather than explain His identity to Nicodemus, Jesus teaches an illuminating truth in v3 and in v7. Read verses 3 & 7.

Unlike our English translations, the Greek uses different words for "you" singular and "you" plural. In v7 Jesus is saying "Do not marvel

that I say to you (singular, ie Nicodemus), You (plural, ie all the Pharisees) must be born again." Jesus is teaching the point that it does not matter how much we know about God or the Bible we must be born again if we are ever to become a true child of God. (See also John 1:11-13)

Nicodemus could not perceive spiritual things so he misunderstood what Jesus meant in v3 and v7. He first questioned Jesus "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter into a second time into his mother's womb and be born?" Jesus appealed to the Old Testament Scriptures in Ezekiel 36:25-27 to explain in verses 5 and 6 that unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the Kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

Jesus also employed an illustration from nature in v8 to explain that the mysterious

work of the Holy Spirit is like the blowing of the wind in how God brings people to realize they need to be born again.

Nicodemus remained confused and asked a second question v9, "How can these things be? On this occasion Jesus responded by rebuking Nicodemus because a teacher of Israel should have understood better and also because the religious leaders of the day had not accepted His teaching. (v10-12).

Then in v13-15 Jesus referred to Numbers 21: 5-10 to explain that we all must look to Christ, the Son of Man who would be lifted up in the Cross of Calvary for the sins of His people. Though God is central in bringing about the New Birth through the work of God the Holy Spirit we must respond in repentance and faith.

Nicodemus' response is not found here but get the boys to consider John 7:50 & 9:38-39.



Application

Nicodemus represented the religious leaders of the day. Today he could be a professor, Elder, Deacon, Youth Leader or Church leader. The fact remains such people do not know God until they realise their need to be born again. You may know the Bible well; you may even be able to recite the Westminster Shorter Catechism in its entirety; but Jesus says, "You must be born again!"

- Nicodemus came to Jesus "by night". How and why do some people today try to hide the fact that they are interested in Jesus? What might keep some from coming to Jesus in repentance and faith?
- Why are we all born in spiritual darkness? What does this mean we all need?
- Personal challenge: Have you been born again? Have you looked to Christ who was crucified for your sins, rose again on the

third day and was exalted to glory? Have you repented of sin and received Jesus as your Saviour and Lord?

Life Story

16th Century German Reformer Martin Luther was a religious monk who sought to earn favour with God through his own pious works but after true conversion Luther wrote the following:

"At last meditating day and night, by the mercy of God, I began to understand that the righteousness of God is that through which the righteous live by a gift of God, namely by faith. Here I felt as if I were entirely born again and had entered paradise itself through the gates that had been flung open."

9. I THOUGHT I KNEW WHAT I NEEDED, BUT JESUS ...



The Big Idea

Understanding that there is a certain idea in the world we live in about what we need to be happy in life. It is completely different from what Jesus knows need and what He can offer.



The Word

Mark 2:1-12



Introduction

What does our world consider the most valued things in life to be? (Get boys to list the top ten.) Now get them to make a list of ten top things that are important in their lives.

Reduce that to six, then three...

Where does God come on this list?



Lesson

These verses tell us of a remarkable Jewish scene. The house would have been an open house. I remember as a boy wherever you went in the country, you would never find a closed front door and the front door would remain open until the evening. It was telling people that they were at home, that they were able to receive visitors and anyone else. This is the way it was in Jesus time. The house had a flat roof, so it was easy to let this man down into the crowd where Jesus was teaching. The roof would probably have been mostly soil and hay so there would have been a covering of sorts. It would have been easy to break through the ceiling and create an entrance for their friend.

This man was in the presence of the Son of God and immediately Jesus could see

something he, "**saw their faith**"(v5). I think not only by the actions of his friends but He could also see into this man as well and make out just what he believed.

The friends took this a step further, they acted in faith. They took to their feet with the one who had no power in his feet in the hope he would soon walk again. Jesus knew this man's problem. He knew that there was a deeper problem in this man's life than that of his paralysis.

This man had a physical problem that would end when he died. However, he had a greater problem that would be with him for all eternity if it wasn't dealt with. Let us not forget what the real problem is with people even more than physical wholeness.

Jesus knew this man's heart and that was why he was able to say in the second half of v5, **"...he said to the paralysed man, 'Son, your sins are forgiven.'"**

In the room that day where the Sanhedrin, who had come down to look at this new teacher's work. Their job was to look after the spiritual welfare of the people. They were the thought police of the day. They would have probably had places reserved for them at the front of the crowd so they could get a better look at Jesus.

Jesus knew exactly what was going on in their minds. They had come to critically appraise his ministry, they had just had heard him say he could forgive sins. They believed only God can forgive sins and they didn't believe that Jesus was the Messiah - the one who the Old Testament promised deliverer of the Jewish nation. So who was this? This man is claiming himself to be God. Jesus knows exactly what they are thinking in their minds.

Look at v8-12. What Jesus was about to give them was the greatest thing they would ever see in their lives, he was going to show them He was the Son of Man. This was the lowest name he used for himself. What he was saying was, I am the Son of Mary, I am the carpenter's son, I who lived in Nazareth have the authority of God. It would have been easy for a false prophet to say your sins are forgiven for who of us can look into a man's heart and say if our sins are forgiven or not. The fruit of that forgiveness would be to see healing, a new body and this is exactly what Jesus gave them.

The atmosphere in that house must have been electric. You think of this man, simply getting up and picking his mat up and pushing his way through the crowd and going home. The result was that everyone in that home that day with the daylight streaming in through the roof, the floor littered with straw, and dried mud, began praising God, praise this man who had such authority such miracles that it drove their hearts to praise God.



Application

1 Many of us as Christians have demonstrated our faith in Christ, even as new Christians we can quickly grow but the world takes us away from Jesus and we stop growing as a Christian. We have failed to keep our faith in Christ.

How do we know we have faith, by the fruit that it bears. What is that fruit; Trust. For the Christian it is trusting in God for everything. To sort out that problem in a relationship, to put into His hands the future a place in university, to put into His hands what you are frustrated by in other people. How much do we trust God for the future, how much do we know He holds the future in our lives, do we have an assurance that whatever happens that He

is in control? Our complete trust in Christ is the fruit of our faith. This is what we see here. This man was trusting Jesus. We need to trust in Jesus not only once when we come to faith in Jesus but for everyday he gives us.

2 If you are a Christian then spend some time in praising God for forgiving you your sin, for making you into a new creation in Jesus, or the hope He gives you and the new life you have in Christ. That no matter what happens in life that He will hold you fast.

Use YouTube/Spotify to listen to "He will hold me fast", Keith & Kristyn Getty.

10. I THOUGHT I WAS REJECTED, BUT JESUS ACCEPTED ME



The Big Idea

That no matter who we are or what we have done or thought Jesus accepts us as we are because His love for us is so big.



The Word

Mark 1:40-45



Introduction

To be a leper in Christ's time was to be an outcast. The skin disease, thought to be incurable, was slow in its progress and continued to destroy the body. Many thought it was contagious so the leper was banned to live outside the community. Usually lepers would gather together in one place. The leper would shout 'unclean, unclean' so that other people could avoid them.

The disease today is known as Hansen's disease. It is not a rotting infection as it is

was commonly thought. However, it attacks the ears, nose, hands and feet. It numbs those parts of the body so there is no feeling in them and so damages them very easily, eg boiling water can burn but they don't feel it. Hansen's disease is non-existent in our society but still prevalent in many countries across the world. What disease or other things can people suffer that could make them perceive they are rejected by others?



Lesson

Mark 1: 40-45. In the verses prior to this we find Jesus healing many – a man with an unclean spirit, the many who stood outside the house of Simon and Andrew looking for healing, and inside Simon's mother-in-law had become unwell with a fever. Jesus brings healing to all. The schedule for Jesus was very busy so, early the next morning, he tried to get time alone to pray. The disciples were out looking for him and found him and told him that 'Everyone is looking for you'. He went on to the next towns to continue his preaching. It is quite obvious that the ministry of Jesus was well known throughout the countryside, so it is not surprising that the leper mentioned in verse 40 knew of

Jesus and what he could do. So, on the day that Jesus was near, he went to Jesus 'implored Jesus', knelt before Him and cried out 'if you will you can make me clean.' We can only imagine the humiliation and isolation of this man's life. With the Coronavirus we were told to keep a distance of 2 metres away from the next person, lest we would become contaminated. It was illegal to even greet a leper and they had to remain 100 cubits away if they were upwind and 4 cubits if they were downwind. Can you guess what 4 cubits is equal to? About 2 metres. The amazing thing is that Jesus engages with him and he is moved with pity at the sight of this poor man. If a leper even

stuck his head into a house then the house was pronounced to be unclean. There was no escaping that any leper brought distance into society and you would not have wanted to be anywhere near such a person. With Jesus it is very different. Jesus reached out and touched this leper and said 'be clean'.

The amazing lesson from this miracle is this – that the Bible tells us that we are spiritually unclean, we are spiritual lepers! What has made us unclean? Sin. (Romans 3:23) sin is breaking God's law. Sin is things like lying, stealing, pride, jealousy etc. However, most of us deny that sin has had such an affect on

us. The leper could not deny his illness. We continually say that there is nothing wrong with us or we are not too bad. So we continue to go our own way and consciously forget God, or as one commentator puts it, we can say, " 'I'm OK', while we have the death of leprosy in our very soul." (Hughes on Mark).

Our sin can have two effects on us. The first is, that we do not see anything wrong with our lives and we convince ourselves that we are not sinners. The second, is when we see our sin and begin to think that our sin is so bad that we are beyond help.



Application

The leper knew he was in a bad condition. We too need to see that there is nothing we can do for ourselves, as in this case, it is only Jesus who can bring healing.

1 Recognise your sinfulness before God.

"Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned." Romans 5:12

2 Recognise that your sin has caused a separation between you and God.

3 Believe that Jesus is the only way to God

and he offers you the gift of salvation. "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." John 14:6. Accept this gift and ask for forgiveness of your sins. Jesus has the authority to forgive you of your sins. "And Jesus came and said to them, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.'" Matthew 28:18.

4 Turn away from your sin. "The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent," Acts 17:30.

Jesus has compassion and his touch and his word too commend what he does for the leper, and also for us, is trustworthy and indeed the ONLY way we can go.

Mark 1:41-42, "Moved with pity, he stretched out his hand and touched him and said to him, 'I will; be clean'. And immediately the leprosy left him, and he was made clean."

The leper was healed and restored. For us that came through Jesus and the Cross of Calvary, as he took our sin and paid the penalty for us, so that we could be cleansed be made whole again. When we trust in Jesus our sin is forgiven and we are made into new people. "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come." 2 Corinthians 5v17

The leper trusted Jesus to change, will you trust Jesus to do the same for you?

Memory Verses



Romans 3:10

As it is written, "There is no one righteous, not even one".

Romans 5:8

But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Romans 10:9-10

If you declare with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved.

Romans 5:1-2

Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand.

