

Good News - Jesus' Way

Introduction

Evangelism technically means 'to share or announce the good news' (according to one of my shelf-bending dictionaries of theology) But in practice, it arouses all sorts of responses from people!

Not all of these are very positive, so this can be a bit of a problem for a church where we have identified the 'Out' part of the 'Up-In-Out' triangle as our weakest area, and evangelism as particularly weak. Instead, we want evangelism to be a central part of what we are about. So how can we start to put things right?



Over the next couple of months in our times together on Sundays and in our home groups, we will be looking at how Jesus shared and announced the good news amongst the people that he met. Perhaps surprisingly, this may often seem quite different from the pictures that we have of 'evangelism'!

This is an opportunity to be honest about our feelings, re-assess some of our ideas about evangelism and encourage one another. It is a time to share stories and experiences. Hopefully, as a result we will feel more confident and better equipped as Christians to share the good news of Jesus with others.

Home Group Notes

Jun-July 2007



The series is also timed to help prepare us for our major re-launch of Alpha in the autumn. This will be a great opportunity to invite people from in and around Alsager to come and find out more about Jesus. It will also be a chance for each of us to get involved –perhaps through practical help with catering or by praying. Alpha will run on Wednesday evenings from 29th Sept.



I hope that over the next few months, you will feel more inspired to pray for people who don't know Jesus in your family, amongst you friends and in our community. Most of all, I pray that you would see many of them coming to know Jesus for themselves as saviour, friend and master.

Toby

I have based some of these notes on the Scripture Union Lifebuilder book: 'Evangelism' by Rebecca Pippert & Ruth Siemens. I have also referred in particular to 'Breaking News' by J John which is a more comprehensive course for groups on evangelism.

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1: Reactions to the E-Word

*The sections are grouped differently this week, but **please use them all**, as an introduction to the series, even if you don't usually.*

WELCOME & WORSHIP

Start by sharing things that you have to be thankful for & prayer requests. Pray for one another, using short prayers.

Now Read through the introduction to the month's notes first.

Next Each take a pen & paper. Draw things that you think of in response to the word 'evangelism'. Be honest! Share what you've drawn and why.

Now, do this...

- Each write down answers to: 'What positive difference has knowing God made in your life (big things or small, big life events or day-to-day)?' Share your answers together.
- Now discuss: How do you feel about telling other people (friends, family, colleagues, home group etc) about the things you mentioned? Would this approach make it easier to discuss your faith?

WORD

Read Luke 5:1-11

Discuss your initial reactions to the passage:

- Does anything in the passage jump out at you? Why?
- Does anything connect with something you've been doing, reading or thinking about?
- Is there anything you haven't noticed before?

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Now use **some** of the questions below (*and set a time limit to leave yourselves time to pray!*)

- Simon and his work colleagues were busy (v2). How do you think they felt about being interrupted by Jesus (v3)? Have you ever felt the same?
- Jesus, a carpenter, told Simon and his friends how to fish (v4). Do you ever think you know better than Jesus?
- The result of fishing in obedience to Jesus was astonishing (v9). What practical implications does this have for us telling others?
- In v10 Jesus commissions these fishermen as evangelists. How would you feel in their shoes and how would you react?

WHAT NEXT?

Before you meet again, each write down the names of 3-7 people who you know who you want to become Christians (or to know Jesus better, if you're not sure where they stand). It will help to put the list somewhere where you will see them regularly (wallet, handbag, shaving mirror, PC screen etc –code them with initials if necessary!)

As a group share one of the names on your list (now or next time) and say a bit about them (not confidential information or gossip!). Make a visible group list somehow –e.g. on flip chart paper, diary page etc of these names.

Commit to pray for the people on your personal lists regularly over the next few weeks.

Pray now for one another.

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2: Who to Tell

WELCOME

Spend time relaxing & sharing together. If you want an ice-breaker, you could try this...

Share one bit of good news & one bit of bad news that you've had or heard this week. Pray for one another about these things.

WORSHIP

Use music, silence, prayer, meditation, reflection, songs, hymns, etc. or be creative with drawing, writing, symbols, poetry etc to help people to draw near to God. You could try this...

As a group: Go through the alphabet A to Z. For each letter, come up with an attribute of God (be creative!). Now use these as a basis for prayer/praise.

WORD

Read John 1:35-51

Discuss your initial reactions to the passage:

- Does anything in the passage jump out at you? Why?
- Does anything connect with something you've been doing, reading or thinking about?
- Is there anything you haven't noticed before?

Now use **some** of the questions below (*and set a time limit to leave yourselves time to pray!*)

- John (v35), Andrew (v41) & Philip (v45) all tell their friends about Jesus. Who introduced you to Jesus, and how?



- Jesus & Philip both invite people to 'Come and See' (v39, 46). How does this fit with your pictures of evangelism? What could it mean in practice today?
- Jesus' first disciples are relatives and friends from a single fishing village (v44). To what extent should we focus our evangelism on people with whom we have connections?
- How would you summarise Nathaniel's character? What changes in him, what doesn't, and how? Does this have any implications for our evangelism?
- Throughout this passage, people tell friends and family about Jesus. How do you feel about doing this? Have you picked up any ideas to help you?

WHAT NEXT?

Make the shared list of people that was suggested in the last session. Share any good news stories about these people. Pray for them together. Make sure you pray specifically for each person on the list. Continue to pray for them when you meet as a group over the next few weeks. You may like to refer back to the list in the months ahead.

Share any ideas that you have to help pray for the people on your individual lists.

As a group, how about organising a social activity in the next few weeks that you could invite along some of the people you are praying for?

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3: How to Tell

WELCOME

Spend time relaxing & sharing together. If you want an ice-breaker, you could try this...

What social situations do you like & which do you hate?

WORSHIP

Use music, silence, prayer, meditation, reflection, songs, hymns, etc. or be creative with drawing, writing, symbols, poetry etc to help people to draw near to God. You could try this...

Collect some household/garden objects –a few more than the number in the group. Invite each person to choose one. In silence, each use your object as a starting point to think about God. Talk to him and listen to him (i.e. pray) in the silence. Then, share any thoughts you want to.

WORD

Read John 4:4-42

Discuss your initial reactions to the passage:

- Does anything in the passage jump out at you? Why?
- Does anything connect with something you've been doing, reading or thinking about?
- Is there anything you haven't noticed before?

Now use **some** of the questions below (*and set a time limit to leave yourselves time to pray!*)

- Looking through the passage as a whole, how does Jesus arouse the woman's interest in the good news?



- How much does Jesus take his lead from the woman's issues, rather than forcing his own agenda?
- Despite the social taboos (v9) and knowing plenty about this woman's background (v17), Jesus chooses to engage in conversation rather than ignore or lecture this woman. What implications does this have for your evangelism?
- In this passage, what is the interaction between telling the good news and showing it in action?
- Jesus uses a gift of prophecy/knowledge to speak about the woman's situation. To what extent do you think that these or any similar gifts have any relevance to our evangelism today?
- What is the impact of this one conversation on the woman's village? What is her role in this?
- Thinking of people you know who don't believe and the community you live in. In what ways do they show a spiritual thirst (v13-15)? What evangelistic ways are most likely to be effective in quenching that thirst?

WHAT NEXT?

Think about the people you are praying for. What particular aspect of the gospel might particularly 'click' with them? This might be a starting point for sharing your faith in a way that is 'good news' to them.

Once again, pray for the people on your shared list. Also share any good news stories about people you've been praying for as individuals.

Please also pray for Alpha starting at the end of September. We will particularly need help with catering and praying. How could you help?

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4: What to Expect

WELCOME

*Even if you don't usually, **please try this...***

Who was most influential person in bringing you to know Jesus? How?

WORSHIP

Use music, silence, prayer, meditation, reflection, songs, hymns, etc. or be creative with drawing, writing, symbols, poetry etc to help people to draw near to God. You could try this...

Put some corn, pictures of corn, or seeds in the middle of the room.

Read out Matthew 13:35-38 & 28:18-20. Play some quiet instrumental music. In the quiet, reflect on God's commission to you as individuals, as a group, and as a church. Thank God for the person you thought of in the 'Welcome' session. Then ask God to speak to you about who you should share your faith with, and how.

WORD

Read Mark 4:1-25

Discuss your initial reactions to the passage:

- Does anything in the passage jump out at you? Why?
- Does anything connect with something you've been doing, reading or thinking about?
- Is there anything you haven't noticed before?

Now use **some** of the questions below (*and set a time limit to leave yourselves time to pray!*)

- Re-read verses 1 & 2. How do you picture the scene? Describe what you see, hear, feel and smell.



- How do you think different people in the crowd would have reacted to Jesus' story (v3-9)?
- How effective do you think stories (fiction, no-fiction or parables) are for communicating with people today?
- Jesus describes four types of listeners. What evidence do you see of these four types of people today in the people you know? Which types seem most common?
- The sower scatters seed indiscriminately. The quality of the soil only becomes evident (to us) by its response. Considering this, who should we tell about Jesus and what responses we should expect?
- Does this passage have any implications for how we follow-up on those we share the good news with? Explain.

WHAT NEXT?

Discuss: Having considered evangelism for these weeks, what difference will it make to you in practice?

Pray for each one of you that God would give you opportunities to share your faith with others and that you would respond in the right way –in what you say, and what you do.

Once again, use the list of people again to pray. Again, share any good news stories about people you've been praying for as individuals.

Continue to use the lists (individual and group), share stories and pray for Alpha over the next few months.