

How can I have faith? - (Alpha 4) – Sunday 29 January 2017

Notes for Home Groups

There are two alternative introductions – use whichever suits your group.

Intro (1)

Think of the best relationships you have. Perhaps with your partner, or children, or friend. Is this a fully reciprocal relationship, or does one side put in more than the other? What are the ingredients that make the relationship work? How much ‘work’ needs to be put in to keep this relationship sound?

Intro (2)

Copy + paste the following website into your browser -

https://ctlsites.uga.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/78/2015/03/light_ofthe_world_hunt.jpg

It will show a picture of Holmen Hunt’s *The Light of the World*. Either download picture to give copies to the group, or have a screen available for the group to view. Discuss this picture in detail. What does it say to you?

How can I have faith? What can this be securely based upon? We can be sure of our faith because (1) the promises of God the Father by his word (2) the sacrifice of Jesus the Son on the cross (3) the assurance of the Holy Spirit in our hearts. Here is one time when thinking of our God as one God yet three persons (Holy Trinity - always difficult) is straight forward and useful.

1. Read - Revelation 3: 19-22. God the Father’s promise from his word.

- a. what sort of past behaviours or misdemeanours could exclude Jesus from coming into someone’s life, if invited?
- b. “If anyone hears my voice and opens the door” (NIV) sounds simple enough, and on one level it is exactly that; yet most find this a quite a challenge. What are the basic steps involved?
- c. What, for you, does the picture of Jesus coming in to eat with you convey? What does it convey in terms of relationship?

2. Read - John 1: 12-13. God the Father’s promise from his word.

- a. Think about the relationship between loving parents and their children. Good parents will do almost anything for their children. Parenting normally involves large quantities of willing self-sacrifice. And this is a life-long commitment, continuing long after our children have fled the nest. Can you see what God has guided John to convey here when

he writes “to become children of God”? (NIV). If you could choose your own parents (excluding your actual parents) who would you choose and why?

3. Read 2 Corinthians 5: 17 and Colossians 1: 19-23. The sacrifice of Jesus on the cross.

a. 2 Corinth 5: 17 - How can anyone refuse this offer from God? No wonder there is an exclamation mark at the end of the verse in most translations! How often have you thought how wonderful it would be to wipe the slate clean? A fresh start, to be a new person; which is exactly what Jesus is offering, through his sacrificial death, to us all.

b. Colossians 1: 19-23 – Having made a commitment to Christ, inviting Jesus into your life, what do these verses indicate has happened to you?

4. Read 1 Peter 1: 3-9. The sacrifice of Jesus on the cross

a. If I said “I am a committed Christian and I will be going to heaven”, am I boasting?

b. If I cannot earn by good works my place in heaven (see Ephesians 2: 8-9) what things are left for me to do following Jesus’s death and resurrection?

5. Read John 14: 15-21. The assurance of the Holy Spirit in our hearts.

a. As Jesus has promised, following our commitment to Him, to send the Holy Spirit to be both with us and in us, can you remember what life was like before the Spirit came to you? What changes within are you (and your friends and family) aware of?

b. The Holy Spirit is the conduit through which our relationship with God is passing and actioned. How has your relationship with God impacted your relationships with others?

c. In which ways do you experience to promptings of the Holy Spirit?

6. Read 1 John 3: 21-24. Amen!!

Prayer

O Saviour Christ, who leads to eternal blessedness those who commit themselves to you: grant that we, being weak, may not presume to trust in ourselves, but may always have you before our eyes to follow as our guide; that you, who alone knows the way, may lead us to our heavenly desires. To you, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, be glory forever.

(Miles Coverdale)