Christ Church W4 – Spring Study Notes

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Hudson Taylor Quotes... grow your faith

Vision Review... What has God said to us – 2017- 2022

Big Questions #1 ... How to read the Bible?

Big Question #2... Why Trust the Bible?

Deep Dive in John's Gospel around Easter

Covid Recovery... Downloadable resource for groups

Other resources: CoE / Diocese of London visions.

A little note on discerning God's will as a church family/leadership:

As we regroup after COVID it is crucial that we discern God's will for the future. He has guided us so far and He is faithful. We'll need to do this as individuals and as a church family. What is God calling you to lay down/take up? **What is God calling us to do together**? Is it going to be a different sort of season?

To do this we need to:

- 1) Look back on where he has taken us what is our story?
- 2) Set aside time to pray seeking God's will rather than our own
- 3) Search for confirmation in God's word does the Bible back it up
- 4) Get wise advice what are other people/churches discerning?
- 5) Seek unity ask that God gives us one mind
- 6) Rely on the Holy Spirit He can reveal what we cannot know
- 7) Walk in faith without faith it is impossible to please God

Key Scriptures you might like to look up:

Mark 1-3 - where we drew our foundations/convictions from

James 1:5 – ask God for wisdom

Psalm 119 – use God's word to check ideas

Prov 11:14 - get good counsel

1 Cor 1:10 - be joined together in the same mind

John 16:13 – the Spirit guides into all truth

Prov 3:5-6 - walk in faith

"A vision should inspire and scare in equal measure" Bishop Paul Williams (2012)

James Hudson Taylor Quotes:

Read about him: www.christianitytoday.com/history/people/missionaries/hudson-taylor.html

"When I cannot read, when I cannot think, when I cannot even pray, I can trust."

"Do not have your concert first, and then tune your instrument afterwards. Begin the day with the Word of God and prayer, and get first of all into harmony with Him."

"All God's giants have been weak people who did great things for God because they reckoned on God being with them."

"God's work done in God's way will never lack God's supply."

"There are three stages to every great work of God; first it is impossible, then it is difficult, then it is done."

"I am no longer anxious about anything, as I realize that He is able to carry out His will for me. It does not matter where He places me, or how. That is for Him to consider, not me, for in the easiest positions He will give me grace, and in the most difficult ones His grace is sufficient."

"It does not matter how great the pressure is. What really matters is where the pressure lies -- whether it comes between you and God, or whether it presses you nearer His heart."

"God isn't looking for people of great faith, but for individuals ready to follow Him."

"Depend on it. God's work done in God's way will never lack God's supply. He is too wise a God to frustrate His purposes for lack of funds, and He can just as easily supply them ahead of time as afterwards, and He much prefers doing so."

"The Great Commission is not an option to be considered; it is a command to be obeyed."

Christ Church W4: Vision and Strategy to 2022

(A CHANCE TO REVIEW)

Background (written in 2017):

Sense that over the past six years we have ridden a very large wave of God's love and favour and are now about to stand up again on the surfboard to ride a new wave.

We value: (the one that explains to ourselves what we are all about)

Gather, Grow, Give Away.

Foundations / Convictions – (the one that keeps us right with God)

"We are Party People, Bible People, Spirit-Filled People, Humble People, Realistic People, Loved by the Father, Called by the Son, In a Spiritual Battle but on the Winning Side, Headed for Wholeness and called to be Dangerously Radical". [Taken from Mark 1-3, Jan 2012].

Mission Statement [up - in - out] (the one the keeps ministry areas in balance and preachers / small group leaders keep banging on about)

Disciples of Jesus [UP to God] making disciples of Jesus [IN to church family] joining God transforming Chiswick, London and the world [OUT to community].

<u>Vision Areas</u> (the one that means we prioritise resources properly and know what we want to see happen)

- 1) More people knowing they are loved, accepted and valued by the living God their Father.
- 2) Our buildings as beacons and the beating heart of the community where people meet God, make friends and transform the world.
- 3) Our people equipped to follow Jesus Monday-Sunday at home and in the workplace
- 4) Children and young people living life in all its fullness, advancing God's kingdom and ministering to the whole church community.
- 5) Jesus worshiped in Spirit and in truth by people of all ages and backgrounds
- 6) God getting all the glory for all he enables us to do
- 7) The wider church and world transformed because we did small things well in partnership with all God's children.

Three Goals: (what we need to put time into now – 2017 onwards)

Streamline Sundays for mission – rationalise service provision to enable growth and mission.

Develop St Alban's to establish the best children and youth work imaginable in the area Monday-Sunday.

Structure mid-week groups for ministry multiplication

Two assumptions:

We will establish a prayer culture that undergirds and makes sense of all the activity

God's work done God's way will not lack God's resources

WHAT EXCITES YOU ABOUT THE VISION / VALUES?

WHAT MAY HAVE CHANGED SINCE 2017?

WHAT DO YOU THINK IS ON GOD'S HEART FOR US NOW?

How to Interpret the Bible: Ian Paul

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5EIKDCgxHtA

lan's talk suggested that there are 4 essential questions:

What Kind of Writing? What did it Mean? What does it Say? What Part of the Story?

In a group setting you might like to just like to look at one/two of these sets of questions (or one from each section)

Introduction:

- How aware are you of the need to interpret Scripture? How has this arisen in your own personal reading of Scripture, and your reading with others?
- What skills and understanding do you bring from other areas of your life, where interpretation is needed?

1. What Kind of writing (genre)

- Which genres within the biblical writings do you find most appealing to read? Which do you find the most challenging? Why?
- Which genres do you find most challenging—which will therefore demand more discipline from you as a reader?
- How has recognizing the genre of a biblical passage or book helped you to make better sense of it?

2. What does it mean?

- What positive experiences have you had of learning about the historical context of a passage of the Bible? How has it helped you read more faithfully?
- What resources might we need in order to understand the context of what we are reading?
- How can we avoid the dangers of Bible study becoming a history lesson, and of dependence on the 'priesthood of the historian'?

3. What does it say?

- When have you had the experience of reading something and realizing that it does not say what you thought it said? How did that feel? How did you manage the sense of disorientation that this led to?
- How easy do you find it to read slowly and carefully?
- What assistance might you need to help you attend more carefully to the text of Scripture?

4. What part of the story?

- How well do you feel you know the biblical story? How well do you know the shape and message of particular books of the Bible?
- What steps would you like to take to improve your understanding of the shape of the biblical canon? How might you be able to help others do this?
- What teaching is there in your church that might help you see the bigger picture of the whole Bible's story?

Want to think more? See Ian's article 'How to Interpret the Bible' on his blog at www.psephizo.com or order his Grove Booklet: 'How to Interpret the Bible'

How can you trust the bible?

Ref: Zoe Philips talk 6pm, 28 Feb 2021.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aZULjujtvh4

Introduction:

- Ask each person to share what their journey with the bible has been like up to now.
- What part (if any) did it play in the faith of your childhood, teens, adult years?
- What's your journey of trusting the bible been like? Has your trust or interest in the Bible ever waned? If so, what caused this?

Going Deeper:

- What piece of evidence regarding trusting the Bible is most compelling to you?
- What's been the best advice or practice that has helped you to read and love scripture?
- What questions do you have about the Bible?

Into Scripture

Read Psalm 19 and 2 Timothy 3:16-17... what does the Bible say about itself...

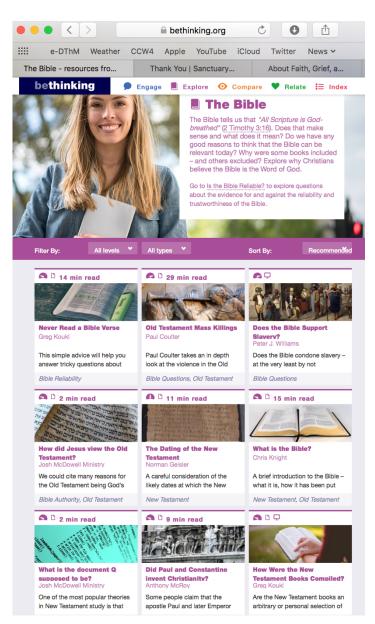
Follow Up

Amy Orr Ewing's book *Why Trust the Bible* is Zoe's recommended read for this session:

Which of these chapters would be most relevant for you?

- 1. Isn't it all a matter of interpretation?
- 2. Can we know anything about history?
- 3. Are the biblical manuscripts reliable?
- 4. Is the content of the manuscripts reliable?
- 5. What about the canon (who chooses the books in the bible)?
- 6. What about other holy books?
- 7. Isn't the Bible sexist?
- 8. What about all the wars?
- 9. Isn't the Bible out of date on sex?
- 10. How can I know if what I believe stands up to scrutiny?

See also <u>www.bethinking.org</u> for lots more articles/talks and comment on key questions you might have about the Bible, belief and lots more (you can filter to see introductory/intermediate/ advanced level input).



Deep Dive into John

Session One: The Spirit Promised

Read: John 14:15-30

Try Ian Paul's questions:

What Kind of Writing? What did it Mean? What does it Say? What Part of the Story?

- Who is he speaking to?
- Does it make a difference that Jesus is saying this in the last few days before the cross? Why?
- What will the Holy Spirit do?
- What's is a take home challenge from this passage?
- KEY ACTION: Have you received the Holy Spirit? If so, How much? A balloon can be filled with a small puff or some great breaths... and can easily leak out...
- PRAY TOGETHER IN FAITH THAT YOU WILL BE TOTALLY FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT

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Session Two: The Spirit's Work

• Read: John 16:5-33

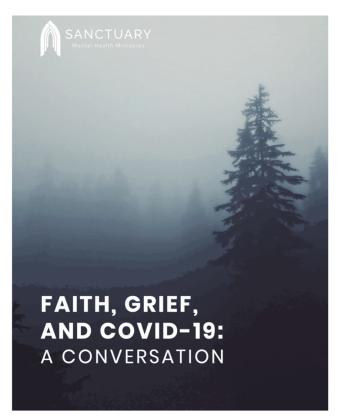
Read verses 8-14 again, slowly, several times

- What stands out to you from the passage?
- What is the relationship between Jesus, the Father and the Spirit
- What do you notice about the work of the Spirit?
- Why is convicting a key part of God's ministry to us through the Spirit?
 What's God's heart behind this do you think?
- PRAY TOGETHER THAT THE SPIRIT WILL CONVICT YOU/THE WORLD
 - Regarding Sin
 - Regarding Righteousness
 - Regarding Judgement
- PRAY THAT THE SPIRIT WILL LEAD US INTO ALL TRUTH AND DECLARE THINGS THAT ARE TO COME

COVID RECOVERY: 2 IDEAS:

1) This four week course may be of interest to you and your small group..

You can sign up for free at https://www.sanctuarymentalhealth.org



Faith, Grief, and COVID-19: A Conversation is a resource that addresses the questions so many of us are facing during this pandemic: How do we understand and process grief as people of faith? How can we support vulnerable and grieving members of our community while practicing physical distancing? Where can we find hope and joy in this season?

Four short films feature insights from a panel of experts with knowledge and experience in the fields of counselling, psychology, theology, and palliative care. Topics addressed include:

- the complex and dynamic nature of grief in this season,
- the presence of grief and lament in Scripture,
- the role that culture and faith play in shaping our experiences of grief,
- the importance of empathy and hospitality in the grieving process,
- practical ways to support those who are grieving.

The films are accompanied by a discussion guide with questions, reflections, and prayers—ideal for use in small groups. The guide also offers tips for facilitation, best practices for online meetings, and links to further resources on mental health and COVID-19.

SUBSCRIBE FOR FREE

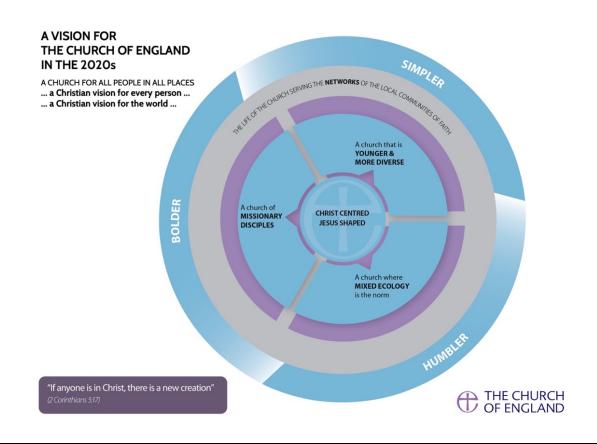
2) Some people may find it helpful to try something different:

An intercessor wrote to me recently and said:

When I have been praying all that I have heard (I believe it was in Conversation with God and not just in conversation with my own thoughts) is "what are the principles you have learnt?"

To which I responded - pray in the opposite manner of what you see (joy for mourning etc) and declare that God is sovereign, and if you are in lack - give away what you are most in need of. So that's how I'm praying and also to use PRAISE as a weapon. So I feel the heaviness of the atmosphere and the lack lustre and exhaustion - so my worship music I listen to right now is all high energy praise, reminding me that the joy is in the fact that my name is written in the Lambs book of life - and the joy of seeing someone encountering God is what I live for!

What is God saying in the wider church?



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