

Home Group notes for the week following Sunday 27th April 2014

THEME: POWER OF THE RESURRECTION

As we Gather

Last week we read of Mary's meeting with the risen Christ. This week we examine the disciples' meeting with Him.

Reading Scripture JOHN 20 : 19 - 31

Thinking together

The disciples were gathered together and afraid of the authorities as they were known to have associated with Jesus before His crucifixion. Suddenly Jesus appeared among them (John 20:19).

Wherever people are confronted with the reality of Jesus' presence, their lives are transformed by grace.

How has the risen Christ changed your life? Discuss

On that first Lord's Day the disciples present in the room moved

- From Fear to Courage (John 20:19-25) as Jesus came to them with the traditional greeting of peace, and reassured them by giving them the opportunity and time to discover that He was indeed their beloved Master.

The basis of all our peace is found in the person and work of Jesus Christ, and the work of the cross is peace (see Romans 5:1-2 and Ephesians 2:14-18)

What do you understand by these statements? Discuss

Once the disciples accepted Jesus really was with them in person, He again identified Himself with the Father by whose authority He did His work. He then commissioned them [just as He commissions us (Romans 10:15)] to carry on with His work of grace; and enabled them through the Holy Spirit (John 20:21-23).

We do not provide forgiveness – God forgives – but we have the privilege of proclaiming forgiveness as the basis of the Gospel message. Our authority comes from God, and He guides and empowers us through the Holy Spirit.

**Discuss the statement 'the message we carry is the Gospel of peace'.
(see also Matthew 16:19 and Mark 2:7)**

- From Unbelief (doubt) to Confidence (John 20:26-28). Doubt is often an intellectual problem – we want to believe but faith is temporarily overwhelmed by problems and questions.

Thomas was not present the first time Jesus came to the disciples, and when they told him what had happened, he wanted a personal experience, and laid down all sorts of conditions needed before he would believe (24-25). Yet when Jesus appeared, Thomas only had to see Jesus to believe (28-29).

**Have you ever wished, like Thomas, that you could see Jesus, touch Him, hear His voice?
Discuss**

Some people need to doubt before they believe, and God wants to be present to everyone at all times. This He does through the Holy Spirit and the Bible. He also chooses other ways that are comforting to us individually.

Discuss some of the ways God makes His presence known to you / communicates with you.

- From Death to Life (John 20:29-31). Faith in the miracles of Jesus should lead to faith in His words and personal experience of faith in the risen Jesus as Saviour and Lord.

If you can, share with the group how you came to accept the risen Christ as your Saviour and Lord

Jesus needed His disciples to carry His message into the world, so He breathed on them and gave them the Holy Spirit – New Life(compare John 20:22 with Genesis 2:7 and Ezekiel 37:9).

In the same way today Jesus needs the Church (body of Christ) to carry His message of salvation and forgiveness (eternal life) to those who do not yet believe in the risen Christ.

Everybody lives by faith – Christians put their faith in God and His Word; unsaved people put their faith in themselves

In Closing

Eternal life means the life of God experienced today. It is a quality of life – the spiritual experience of living in the Lord's presence (heaven on earth) today.

A Prayer you might like to read

Father, through your Son, you are giving new life to the world.
Help me to continue in my desire to be with Him, so that I may
experience the power of His resurrection.
I ask this in the name of Jesus, my Lord. Amen