

Home Group notes for the week following 3rd June 2018

FREEDOM TO LIVE AND TO LOVE

AS WE GATHER

Wherever Jesus went, great crowds gathered to see Him heal the sick and cast out demons. He knew that most of them were blind to their spiritual needs, and He often had to go apart to pray. Every servant of God / disciple should follow Jesus' example and take time away from people in order to meet the Father and be refreshed and revived through prayer.

READING SCRIPTURE Mark 2:23 – 3:6 [optional readings 1 Samuel 3:1-10 Psalm 139:1-5 + 13-18
2 Corinthians 4:5-12]

THINKING TOGETHER

After they came out of Egypt, God gave Israel the Sabbath as a spiritual sign between the nation and Himself [optional readings Exodus 20:8-11 and Exodus 31:12-13]. Jewish tradition went into great detail about acts forbidden on the Sabbath, and the Sabbath day became a burden – a symbol of the religious bondage that had captured the nation. So when Jesus began openly to violate the Sabbath traditions it was like declaring war against the religious establishment. Religion is not made up of rules and regulations

What lies at the heart of religion? Discuss

[optional readings Acts 13:38-39 + 52 James 1:22-27]

By picking grains of wheat on the Sabbath the disciples had violated only man-made traditions (Mark 2:23-24), but the Pharisees were so focused on the words of the rules, they missed the intent of the rules.

The first claim on anyone is the claim of human need

In ministry do you sometimes focus more on what should be done than on why it should be done? Discuss (Mark 2:24-26)

[optional reading 1 Samuel 21:1-6]

What do you think the Pharisees felt about Jesus' response to their accusation? Discuss (Mark 2:27-28)

Every country has institutionalised certain services as Essential Services

What are these essential services, and what influences their successful provision? Discuss

How does your local church provide for human need? Discuss

The best way to worship God is by helping others, and things considered sacred by the Church are never more sacred than when being used to help those in need

What are the sacred things in your life, and how do you use them to help others? Discuss

When Jesus went the temple to worship He knew the Pharisees were watching Him (Mark 3:2), and He deliberately challenged their legalistic traditions by healing the man with the shrivelled arm (Mark 3:3)

Why, do you think, did the Pharisees not answer Jesus' question? Discuss (Mark 3:4)

How would you answer Jesus' question? Give reasons for your answer

[optional readings Psalm 139:1-5 + 17 1 Samuel 3:1-10]

What happens in a local faith community when people focus on prestige and the trappings of worship instead of on the will of Christ? Discuss

Why was Jesus angry with, and distressed by, the Pharisees? Discuss (Mark 3:5-6)

[optional reading Matthew 23]

IN CLOSING

To the Pharisees, religion was ritual. They had lost their focus as religious leaders – to point people to God. But to Jesus, religion was service – love of God, and love of others as a response to the cry of human need.

God uses us to spread His Good News. He gives us the power to do this, and our responsibility is to let people see God through us.

How do you do this>

PRAYER

Creator God,

you made us in love for holiness and rest in you.

Help us to live according to your laws and to walk in your ways of wisdom, so that we may find the freedom of true life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen