

Home Group notes for the week following 27th August 2017

DISCIPLESHIP: Knowing Jesus

AS WE GATHER

Hearing about Jesus may precede knowing Him; but knowing Jesus is a personal journey of discovery as we spend time with Him daily, learning from Him as we see Him in action, receive His teaching, and acknowledge Him as Lord and Master of our lives.

READING SCRIPTURE Exodus 1:8 – 2:10 Psalm 124 Romans 12:1-8 Matthew 16:13-20

THINKING TOGETHER

On their way to Jerusalem, Jesus and His disciples withdrew from the crowds as often as possible. Jesus had much to say to, and to teach, His disciples. Matthew tells us that on this occasion they left Jewish territory and moved up to Caesarea Philippi – an area with many temples to various pagan gods.

Jesus knew that at this time the disciples held the common Jewish view that He was one of the great prophets come back to life, and would be followed by the coming of the Messiah.

To His question “who do you say I am?” only Peter responded, by confessing Jesus as divine / the long awaited Messiah (Matthew 16:16 John 18:33-34).

If you had been one of the other disciples do you think you would have agreed with or understood Peter’s answer? Discuss

Basic to salvation is a true decision / confession of who Jesus is (Romans 10:9-11): what we discover ourselves about Christ comes as a revelation from God – a gracious gift to a humble believer (Matthew 16:17 + 11:25-27). It is not an emotional response but a heart and mind statement of conviction (1 John 2:18-23)

How did you first come to accept Jesus as your Saviour and Lord? Discuss

It is on this conviction that Christ – through the Holy Spirit – can build a stronger faith and lead us into deeper truth

Is Jesus the Lord and Master of your life? Discuss

In the Old Testament a rock is the symbol of God (Deuteronomy 32:4), so when Jesus called Peter the rock on which He would build His Church, He was making Peter the first member (or living stone) of a new, universal fellowship / assembly of those who believe and confess Christ as Son of God (Matthew 16:18)

How does it make you feel to know you are a living stone in Christ’s Church? Discuss

Matthew 16:18 is the first time the word ‘church’ is used in the Bible. Jesus is the foundation on which the Church / God’s temple is built (Psalm 118:22 Isaiah 28:16 Ephesians 2:19-22). He unites all people to form a new body (Ephesians 2:11-18 Galatians 3:26-28) of which He is the Head (Ephesians 1:22 Colossians 1:18) and gives each believer gifts to use for benefitting His Church (Romans 12:4-8)

How do you use your gifts / talents to benefit the Church / body of Christ? Discuss

Just as death has no power over the Living Christ / God, so is His Church indestructible (Matthew 16:18 Revelation 1:18). In the same way that He gave to Peter, so Jesus has given to all believers the authority (gates), the power and the privilege (keys) to “open the door of faith” to others, so they too may enter into the promise of Christ

What is meant by “the promise of Christ”? Discuss (Acts 2; 8:14-17; 10)

How does this knowledge make you feel? Discuss

Binding and loosing – forbidding and permitting – was a familiar concept to the Jews, being used often by Rabbis in giving judgement on a religious matter. Matthew records that Peter (16:19) was given the privilege of exercising his authority according to Jesus’ word. In the same way the Church today obeys God’s will on earth

Is it always easy to know God’s will? Discuss (1 John 4:1-3)

IN CLOSING

Believers today have the same privileges and responsibilities as were laid upon Peter. Each member / living stone of the Church serves Jesus, truth and justice in faith and love.

Do you look for Jesus in the people you meet?

PRAYER

O God our Saviour, you reveal your salvation through Christ.
Open our hearts to hear your word that we may seek Christ’s presence in everyone we meet.
By you Holy Spirit you nourish us with life and transform us,
that being members of one body we are able to offer our gifts in Christ’s service. Amen