

Home Group notes for the week following Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> February 2017

**... GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY BREAD...**

**Blessed to be a Blessing**

### **As we Gather**

The Bible is full of God's glory and majesty; and the holiness of God. He is distinct from His creation – in it yet above it, sustaining it yet transcending it. He is a caring and loving God.

From the start of the Old Testament we are constantly shown that love is essential to God. If holy is what God is, then love is how He is. It is because He is love we can trust Him and love Him in return.

**Reading Scripture      Isaiah 58:1-9a (9-12) Psalm 112    1 Corinthians 2:1-12 (13-16)  
Matthew 5:13-20**

### **Thinking Together**

God provides for all our needs – small and great, physical and spiritual, temporal and eternal (Matthew 6:25-33).

John writes that love in God is an outgoing force (1 John 4:16). The essence of love at its highest is self-giving in grace (Romans 5:6-8).

**How has God demonstrated His love and grace to the world? Discuss**

When He was teaching, Jesus always used simple, everyday examples to illustrate His meanings. In Matthew 5:13-16 His use of salt and light were symbols readily understood by His listeners as He fed them spiritually.

Christians today are part of God's great plan, and those who make no effort to affect the world round them cannot be used by Him to serve Him.

**How can believers affect the world round them? Discuss (Isaiah 58:6-12 Psalm 112)**

God wants us to trust Him completely, and He wants our service to go beyond our own personal spiritual growth (James 1:17-20). But today many church leaders and members mix philosophy (human wisdom) with God's revealed message, causing confusion and division

**What are the implications of this for the Church? Discuss (1 Corinthians 2:4-5 + 9-13 and Ephesians 3:16-21)**

**What else can cause believers to become indifferent / drift from the church? Discuss**

If we live for Christ we have a radiance, a joyousness and a compassion which reveals to others the presence of Christ in our lives (John 17:20-26)

**When do believers fail today to reveal God's glory / to take a stand ? Discuss**

God's moral and ceremonial laws were given to help people love God totally – with minds and hearts, in their daily lives. By the time of Jesus, religious leaders had turned these laws into a confusing burden of rules (John 1:17).

Jesus came to reveal the real meaning / essence of The Law – reverence and respect for God, respect for others, for self, and for creation

### **How did He manifest this? Discuss**

Israel's ceremonial laws were given to point forward to Christ and the principles behind them are still relevant today in guiding our conduct as we worship and love a holy God (Isaiah 58:1-9a and Deuteronomy 24:10-15). Much of Jesus' teachings concerned their application, and the Holy Spirit today reveals God's will and guides believers.

### **How does the work of the Holy Spirit manifest in our behaviour? Discuss**

The moral law (10 Commandments) is the direct command of God (Exodus 20:1-21), and requires strict obedience. These commandments reveal the nature of God and Jesus obeyed them implicitly. His food was to do the will of God.

Their principles still apply to believers today as our motive is love and gratitude for God's provision (Romans 8:1-4 2 Corinthians 3)

### **How are you doing in obeying God? Discuss**

In Matthew 5:17-20 Jesus is teaching that the quality of our goodness should not be the piety of self-righteousness, but the God-given righteousness of heart and attitude as we are brought back to God's Word; and to the awareness that through His total obedience to His Father, Jesus, by His death, set aside the old covenant of law and brought in the new covenant of grace (Hebrews 9-10).

### **In Closing**

Our Father in heaven who cares about us and meets our every need knows that we live in a world that is not simply God made, but is also one that we have made by our over-exploitation of natural resources, greed and selfishness.

The God who gives us life is the God who provides, the God who forgives and who ultimately is the God who will judge.

He does not lay upon us the evil of the world, but He does call us to work with Him to alleviate its misery for someone, somewhere, in some way.

### **What are you doing in response to His call?**

### **PRAYER**

Holy and sovereign God,  
sometimes my only defence against you is to pick out the comfortable bits of your story, but it is a self-deluding game. Underneath I sense your power, reaching to the heart of things, a knowledge that sees me as I am, and shows me to myself. and that is why I try to cover up, to hide. But you are my reality. To sit with you is like no other meal; the bread and wine no ordinary fare – your presence hurts, but tenderly rebuilds, and love takes on a new responsibility.

Amen