

Home Group notes for the week following Sunday 6th September 2015

USING MY SPIRITUAL GIFTS TO GOD'S GLORY

As We Gather

For James, just as real / genuine religion consists of purity of heart, thought and deed, so true / saving faith consists of total trust in, obedience to, and dependence on, our Lord.

Reading Scripture **JAMES 2:1-10 & 14-17 (see also SPALM 123 MARK 7:24-27)**

Thinking together

In the Mark reading we discover that in order to get away from the increasing opposition of the Jewish spiritual leaders, Jesus took His disciples away from the crowds into Gentile territory. He was practicing what He preached – that there is no difference between people; all are sinners and need a Saviour. We see two faith responses to Jesus and how He dealt with each according to the need experienced.

Faith takes God at His word

Do you take God at His word in times of distress / crisis? Discuss

Although Jesus needed rest He took time to heal all who came to Him and by the time He and the disciples left the region people were glorifying the God of Israel (Matthew 15:21-31).

Faith is a key doctrine in the Christian life; being confident that God's Word is true and convinced that acting on that Word will bring His blessing.

Sometimes we claim to have faith but this is merely an intellectual agreement with Christian teaching. True / saving faith transforms thoughts and actions. It becomes part of our lives and lifestyle (we live by it) [James 2:14].

An empty religion / faith will betray itself in superficial distinctions among people. This is incompatible with the faith of our Lord.

Are you easily impressed and judge people by worldly / human standards? Discuss [James 2:1-7]

Why do we often judge an individual by economic status? Discuss [James 2:2-4]

James refers to the 'royal law' [James 2:8-10 see also John 15:12]

The principle being that this is the will of God, and is the basis of all relationships / interactions.

Why is it wrong to judge a person by human standards? Discuss (Romans 13:8 Galatians 5:13-14)

Almost every church has its cliques

What could be / often is the result of snobbery in the church? Discuss

James points out that to experience a fine emotion but fail to put it into practice is meaningless [James 2:14-17].

How can we practice the deity (divinity / glory) of Christ in our daily lives? Discuss

How can we tell whether or not we are exercising true / saving faith? Discuss

In Closing

We cannot separate human relationships from divine fellowship (1 John 4:20-21). The mature Christian practices the truth (hears and implements God's Word).

Most churches have a statement of faith

What is St John's statement of faith?

PRAYER YOU MIGHT LIKE TO PRAY

God of love, your embrace includes everyone:
open our hearts and minds to your generous will,
that in what we say and do we may proclaim Christ's love
and serve the needs of our neighbours. Amen

