



GRACE GOSPEL



STUDY BOOKLET

Grace // Gospel Applied

BIBLE STUDIES

Study leaders:

This short series of bible studies will cater to the first part of Term 3, 2022, and is designed to sit alongside the topical preaching series (*Grace-Gospel Applied*) at Kiama Anglican Churches.

In these studies we use a more directive approach than our previous 2022 studies. While we adore the *Swedish Method* of bible study for its sense of adventure, it is much harder to use when we are building a 'big picture.' This is because you need to not only understand what a particular passage says, but also how it contributes to the overall argument. So in these studies we use 'leading questions' to move the conversation forward. Many of the preachers have contributed their own questions to these studies, which will help us in exploring these topics.

Of course, that sense of direction should not take away your agency as bible study groups. Rather, we expect robust discussions, and even (charitable) disagreement, as we tackle some big issues.

By way of users' notes:

Each passage includes the "**Preached on...**" date. This is not to say that you have to wait for the sermon, nor fully depend upon the preacher's work. However, reflecting on the sermon may be an aid to you in your preparation, or it may help to expand your thinking on a passage. Our preachers are men and women who have 'studied to show themselves approved workers' (2 Tim. 2:15). Yet it remains true that they, like us, are fellow disciples—learning to discern the face and voice of God in the text: at times perceiving 'in part, as in a mirror' (1 Cor. 13:12). So please use the sermons as a resource, even as you yourselves 'search the scriptures, to see if these things are so' (Acts 17:11).

Preached July 17^(8/10) and 24^(8:30/6pm)

The Heat Heart Of Church Relationships

Luke 15:11-24, 2 Peter 1:1-11 (8am, Genesis 3:16-24)

What is Grace?

1. **Discuss** what you understand “grace” to be in the context of the Christian gospel.
2. **Read** Genesis 3:15-24. How is God’s ‘grace’ shown here?
3. **Read** and **discuss** Genesis 34:6-7. In terms of grace, how does God describe himself?
4. How does Jesus’ parable of the Prodigal Son (found in Luke 15:11-24) illustrate God’s grace?
5. Ephesians 2:8-9 are the classic verses on salvation by grace. What do they say about God’s action and our part in salvation?
6. Now **read** Eph. 2:10. What does this add to your understanding?
7. “Grace is not a thing ... It is an action.” **Discuss.**

Optional verses to consider: Zechariah 12:10; John 1:14; Romans 3:23-24; Galatians 2:21; 2 Timothy 1:9; 1 Peter 5:10.

Grace In Church Relationships

8. What does it mean to be gracious to one another?

Read Philippians 2:1-16

9. v2 What is to be our attitude to others?
10. v3-4 What is humility?
11. v5-8 What was Jesus 'mindset' (NIV 2011) or 'attitude' (NIV 1984)?
12. v12-13, What are we to do? What is God doing?

Read 2 Peter 1 1-11.

13. What is Peter saying about the way we 'work out our salvation'?
14. "God's grace is given freely, but it also enables and invites human response, so that people are called to behave towards God with worship, gratitude and obedience; and towards one another in ways that reflect and broadcast the graciousness of God." (Dictionary of Biblical Theology) **Discuss.**

Optionally, consider also Colossians 3:1-17; Galatians 5:13-26; Philippians 4:8.

Preached July 24 ^(8/10) and August 7 ^(8:30/6pm)

The Grace-Gospel and **Evangelism**

Exodus 18:13-26, Matthew 9:35-38, 2 Corinthians 5:10-6:2

'Evangelism,' like 'baptism' or 'angel,' is actually a Greek word which we have not fully translated into English. It comes from the word *evangel*, which we do translate as 'Gospel.'

So, 'evangelism' is a sharing of the 'evangel'—the Gospel. A 'gospel,' in the ancient world, was a message of great importance. The victory at the Battle of Marathon was described as a 'gospel.' So too was the birth of Caesar Augustus (Priene 150.40-41). So in evangelism, we share the momentous news of Christ Jesus: one greater than Caesar Augustus; who defeated Satan, Sin and Death—not just the Persians at Marathon.

Discuss

1. Who is an evangelist? Are all Christians evangelists?

Read 2 Corinthians 5:19-21.

2. What is an ambassador for Christ, based on these verses?
3. What terms does the bible use that are similar to 'Christ's ambassador'? Where do you find these terms (e.g. Acts 1:8)?

Read Matthew 9:35-38

4. Israel was waiting for their Messiah: "*the harvest is plentiful,*" Jesus said. Do you think that is true, in the same way, in our day and age? Why or why not?

5. What could it mean to apply v. 37-38 in our own time?

Bringing it together

6. Specifically (by name), who do you spend time with face-to-face?
7. What do you do to express love-in-action to each of them?
8. What "God conversations" have you had with the people you spend time with?
9. What support and encouragement would help you to live as Jesus' ambassador?

Who can you ask to provide this?

10. Take the time to reflect on the people you spend time with, before praying this prayer:

Heavenly Father, as I am Present with those you have connected me with: May I be Pastorally Caring, Loving my neighbours as myself, Listening to them, Affirming what is good in what they say, Providing and referring appropriate help.

May I be prayerful, Praying for and with them. May I Proclaim your gospel, Lovingly speaking in a Biblically-informed way.

And may I be aware that I am your Ambassador to these precious people, Christ making His appeal through me. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

Preached August 7^(8/10) and 14th^(8:30/6pm)

An Inconvenient Truth—**Ecology**

Psalm 8, Luke 12:13-21^(8am), 2 Peter 3:3-14

Brainstorm

1. What makes something valuable?
2. What makes our planet valuable to us?
3. How might climate change harm the things we find valuable on earth?

Read Psalm 8.

4. In this Psalm, who is responsible for Creation?
5. What difference is there between God and humanity in this Psalm?
6. If you were trying to give humanity a 'grade' against Psalm 8:6, how would you say we are going?

Read Revelation 11:18.

7. The word for 'destroying the earth' in Rev. 11:18 (Strong's number 1311) means *to destroy, waste, bring to decay; to corrupt, or to pervert utterly*. How does God react to environmental destruction?
8. Do you think that 'corruption of the earth' is only about microplastics and CO2, or could there be a spiritual aspect to it?

Climate change is "the greatest moral challenge of our generation" said Kevin Rudd PM, National Climate Summit, Parliament House, Canberra, 31 March 2007.

9. What 'moral issues' are raised by climate change?

[Some suggestions: Intergenerational equity; treatment of climate refugees; rich v poor nations]

Read 2 Peter 3:3-14.

10. What does Peter say the heavens and earth are being 'kept for' (v. 7)?
11. In verse 7, who or what is this judgement directed at?
12. Do you think Peter is describing a physical reality in these verses?

Bringing it together

There are many ways we can envision the difference between the world now and the world to come. It can be viewed as:

Replacement: the world now will be fully done away with and replaced by a 'new heavens and new earth.'

Renovation / Restoration: the world will be 'healed' by God and 'made new.'

Inheritance: God's people will inherit this world, in whatever state it is in on / after the Day of the Lord.

13. Which description do you find most compelling, biblically?
14. *If* the world is to be fully replaced / renewed, does that give Christians the right to trash it? Think back to Psalm 8, Rev. 11:18, etc.
15. How could the call to live 'holy and godly lives' (2 Pe. 3:11) impact our response to current (or future) destruction of the earth?

Preached August 14 ^(8/10) and 21st ^(8:30/6pm)

The Grace-Gospel and **Suffering**

Isaiah 53:1-13, Romans 5:1-11, 1 Peter 4:12-19

Read Isaiah 53:1-6

1. What does the person described in these verses know about suffering?
2. What was the point of his suffering (what did it achieve)?
3. In verses 11-12, what will happen to him after his suffering?
4. Who do you think 'he' is?

Read Romans 5:1-4

5. How do the people described in these verses feel about suffering?
6. What is the result of suffering, as described in these verses?

1 Peter 2:19-20 says: *...it is commendable if someone bears up under the pain of unjust suffering because they are conscious of God. But how is it to your credit if you receive a beating for doing wrong and endure it? But if you suffer for doing good and you endure it, this is commendable before God.*

7. Based on 1 Peter 2:19-20, what is the difference between 'good suffering' and 'bad suffering'?

Read 1 Peter 4:12-19

8. Is suffering a blessing, or a curse, according to Peter?

9. What is it that makes suffering a blessing or a curse?

10. How should we respond to suffering?

Bringing it together

11. What does God know about suffering?

12. How does that help us in our suffering?

13. So what is the point of suffering in the Christian life?

Preached August 21st ^(8/10) and 28th ^(8:30/6pm)

The Grace-Gospel and **Politics**

Romans 1:1-17, Matthew 1:18-23, Micah 1:1-4

Discuss:

1. If you asked a non-Christian what “Christian politics” means, what might they say?
2. Would those “Christian political values” align with authentic Christian values?

To what extent?

Read Romans 1:1-4

3. What titles and descriptions can you see being applied to Jesus in these verses?
4. When we think about ranks: policeman, judge, political minister, governor, prime minister, governor-general, kings, queens and caesars... Where would you place Jesus, based on these verses?

Read 2 Samuel 7:11b-13

5. How does God’s promise to king David help us to understand Jesus as Son of David, Son of God (like in Romans 1)?
6. What could Jesus’ identity mean for Christian engagement with politics?

7. Based on **Romans 1:16-17**, are earthly politics the primary purpose of the Gospel?

Read Isaiah 42:1-8

8. In these verses, what will God's chosen servant do (see v. 4, 6-7)?
9. Unlikeable politicians don't last long. But kings do not have to be kind, nor good. Their status is secured by right. But what kind of king will God's servant be?
10. In light of what we have learned about Jesus' status and rank, what kind of political stances *could* Christians take?
11. In light of what we know about Jesus' attitude and purposes, what kind of stances *should* Christians take?
12. "The Christian is not here to personally establish God's kingdom in this world. The Christian is here to herald the coming kingdom, and to welcome in the outsider." Do you agree? Why or why not?