

Word Notes Sunday 16/04/17
Tony Hodge: The Resurrection – Fake News or Good News?

Summary (read this bit out to remind cell members what was said on Sunday, listen to the podcast if you missed the talk <http://www.newmarketcommunitychurch.co.uk/podcasts.htm>)

Key Text: 1 Corinthians 15:1-23

In verses 17-19 of the text Paul says this: “...if Christ has not been raised, then your faith has nothing to it; you are still guilty of your sins. And those in Christ who have already died are lost. If our hope in Christ is for this life only, we should be pitied more than anyone else in the world.” That makes Christ’s resurrection the single most important issue of our faith and crucial that we both believe it to be truth and be able to defend that position, especially in these days of “Fake News”.

When world leaders are promoting the idea of “alternative truths” to counter inconvenient truth that doesn’t support their view I fear our western society is falling back into the dark ages. I want to be sure of my ground – Jesus died, was buried and was raised from the dead. He was then seen by many witnesses and his enemies couldn’t deny the empty tomb or produce even a substitute body. Having seen first-hand these things the lives of the disciples and others were deeply changed. Fearful men became powerful advocates of the truth of the gospel and many died for their witness and insistence of the truth.

Against a background of many Old Testament prophecies fulfilled by Jesus’ life and the clear dozen or so relating to the manner of his death and resurrection the truth of the events of Easter are a compelling argument to faith. The events recorded in Acts including the coming of the Holy Spirit, miracles and the beginnings of the church demonstrate the outcome of that unique day. The continued effect of a world-wide church today both of movements and individuals reflects the power of God to rescue not just His Son but all who will believe.

Application (this is the bit where cell members get to participate. Lead discussions around these points)

- 1) Is Jesus’ resurrection Fake News or Good News? Are you unwaveringly convinced of the historical truth of this most crucial fact of our faith? Did Sunday’s presentation help convince you or raise any questions in your mind? If so discuss them.
- 2) If you’ve not read the key text (1 Corinthians 15:1-23) do so now.
 - a) Does Paul allow any “wobble room” over the truth of the resurrection?
 - b) What does our relativistic (“there is no absolute truth”) and universalist (“all paths lead to God”) society make of such a claim?
 - c) How can we sensitively share a concept of truth that is so uncompromising?
- 3) The disciples lives were changed, 11 of the 12 were likely martyred for their testimony and faith. How has your life been changed by the truth of the resurrection? Is your testimony as solid as theirs and how does that affect your everyday decisions, actions and words?

Witness (this is the bit where the cell talks, plans and prays about how to share the Good News)

There have been reports of a few people coming in to The Stable on a Sunday morning because of our presence on the High Street. Discuss how we might take advantage of the location to create opportunities for witness and invitation.