

Word notes Sunday 28/04/13 Tony Hodge
The Need for Salvation

Summary (read this bit out to remind cell members what was said on Sunday)

Key Texts: Rom 3:23, 6:23 & 5:8, Matt 11:28-30

The Good News of the gospel is only “Good” when we understand our eternal perspective as captured in Romans 3:23 and 6:23 (first half). In the example from the film “Evan Almighty” the friends, neighbours and colleagues think Evan Baxter is nuts to build an Ark and to say that a flood is coming. It’s only when a nearby dam breaks and the floodwaters approach that they realise the truth of their situation and all run into the Ark.

Thankfully there is indeed Good News in the gospel – and Paul does not hesitate to come right to the promise in Rom 6:23 (second half). The problem is that to accept that I may be a sinner – not fully up to the standard of the Law or that this is even a problem is difficult for me – I may be proud, or self deceived but surely with all the good stuff I do that can’t be right – and in any case there’s always someone much worse to point at.

The Jews certainly thought this way, they were God’s chosen people, yet Paul makes it clear in Rom 3:23 that even they have fallen short. When I take a good long look at myself I can see that I have no chance of meeting even just those 6 of the 10 commandments that apply to how I live alongside others, let alone if I have truly honoured God and Him alone. Understanding this is what Christians call being “convicted of Sin”. But if I’m convicted there is Good News – my sentence has already been served by Jesus himself so that when I gave my life to Jesus it wasn’t out of fear, nor condemnation but in faith and hope, realising that actually I needed him (Rom 5:8).

The same invitation that Jesus gave to the people of Israel 2000 years ago and captured by Matthew’s gospel in Matt 11:28-30 holds true today. Only Jesus could come from the eternal, into the present and return to the eternal to be able to make this invitation to all, even today and in the future. The invitation to “come” is one that all can choose to accept or reject, to accept will bring the kind of rest for our souls that cannot be found elsewhere – both for the here and now and the hereafter.

Jesus captured people’s attention through miracles, showing his compassion for their worldly problems as well as telling the Good News of the Kingdom. We too can reach out to our neighbours to meet their needs with the same compassion, unconditionally, and if that gives us an opportunity should not shy away from sharing the Good News too. Unless they know, how can they respond?

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

Can you remember the first time you heard the gospel and responded to it? What did it feel like in your heart? Do you think the Holy Spirit was working to make that gospel invitation effective in your life?

Had you thought that Jesus is speaking the words of the gospel invitation even today? If non-Christians could have this understanding do you think that would change their response to the gospel?

What are the important elements in the gospel invitation? Do you include all when sharing the gospel with others? What one thing could you add or change to make the way you share the gospel more effective?

Could you easily turn to four or five appropriate verses in the Bible to explain the gospel invitation clearly to others?

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

Plan a Cell outreach activity.