

Word Notes Sunday 26/06/16
Clare Reed: Real Life, Real God. Week 3

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>)

Psalms 26 and 32: Guilty?

These two psalms come from a group of psalms from ps 25-33, and they sit opposite each other in the set making a pair that counterbalance each other. Both psalms are modelling how we can live out the Gospel in real life, and each addresses one of two main ways we may fail to do that. On the one hand, forgetting the forgiveness we have received through Jesus and feeling stuck and condemned in our sin. (ps 26). On the other hand, forgetting the forgiveness we have through Jesus and trying to prove ourselves to God. (ps 32).

Psalm 26 begins with a claim that “**I have led a blameless life**” – this doesn’t sound very Christian! Most other translations actually say “I have lived with integrity”. This is not claiming to be sinless, rather claiming to have been honest with God about our sin. The key to this is the next verse: “**examine my heart and mind**”. This is not in the sense of a test we must pass, but through being secure in his love and faithfulness to forgive, we are safe to expose the deepest places of our hearts and minds to his loving counsel. What do we hope God finds in our hearts and minds?

- **Boundaries** (v 4-5). Not claiming to be better than others, but recognising our own weakness to temptation and needing to choose wise boundaries to resist sin.
- **Cleansing** (v6) Just as God’s people in the Old Testament acknowledged their need of ongoing forgiveness and cleansing through their ritual washing and sacrifices, so we need to keep acknowledging our need for ongoing forgiveness and cleansing through Jesus.
- **Praise** (v7). Our natural response to all this is praise.

Psalm 32 addresses our situation if we do not open our hearts and minds to God’s examination, what if we “keep silent”? Perhaps vs 3-4 are metaphorical, describing the emotional and mental anguish of un-confessed sin. Perhaps they describe physical illness as a consequence of sin. Be wary though of regarding sin as an indicator for un-confessed sin – a far more reliable indicator is in v4 “Your hand was heavy upon me”.

Notice the great contrast in v5 – how straightforward it is! We confess, God forgives! Therefore (v6) let’s all do that!

Finally in verses 8-9 it seems David is speaking God’s words to us. God will instruct, teach and counsel us, our challenge is not to be a donkey (horse or mule) and wait to be dragged to God. He won’t do that, it is our choice to open our hearts to him and receive his forgiveness.

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

Ps 26 vv4-5 speak of setting boundaries with the “deceitful”, “Hypocrites” etc. In the New Testament Jesus makes a point of engaging with the people who would have been placed in this category. Does Jesus contradict these verses? How do we take these verses, and Jesus’ example and apply both to our lives?

Ps 26 v6 speaks of the regular rituals of cleansing and sacrifices that David would have made in awareness of his sin. As Christians, we do not have the same symbolic rituals. How can we keep that sense of ongoing cleansing and dependence on Jesus’ sacrifice alive in our hearts and minds?

Read Ps 32:8-9. Are you aware of God’s instruction, teaching and counsel in your life? How do you ensure you are receiving all three?

Considering the two ways that we may fail to live out the Gospel in our lives (either continuing to try to prove ourselves or feeling condemned in our sin), is there one of those which you particularly identify or feel challenged by? Are you brave enough to share with the group and encourage one another in discussion and prayer to put on your “Gospel specs”?

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

On Sunday, Clare asked for volunteers to try to explain the Gospel in 2 minutes. We had some brave volunteers, and now it’s your turn! As a group, identify the main points of the Gospel, and then try to explain them in 2 minutes or less! (For bonus points, remember it and take the Gospel message to someone else this week)