

Word notes Sunday 12/05/13 Tony Hodge
Good News: The Cross

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

Key Texts: 1 Corinthians 1:17-2:2 (The Message)

When sharing the Good News of Jesus, sooner or later we must come to the Cross. Jesus' ministry on Earth took him to the Cross and Peter and Paul's preaching and teaching underlines its centrality to the message of salvation. Jesus' life ended there as he paid the price for our rebellion from God and makes a way for the glorious triumph of the resurrection and our hope of new life with Jesus. Even so Paul is quite clear that the Cross is a deep challenge to all – a stumbling block for the Jews expecting a warrior king and foolishness to others who see not victory but defeat, not glory but suffering and pain.

The real Good News is that contained within the Cross, ie Jesus' suffering, death and resurrection, is the power to deal with our Sin and demonstrate the new life that all those who join with Jesus at the Cross have – now and in the age to come. Gal 2:20 sums up the contract we make with God through Jesus in order to change our eternal position from death to life, and it's not some watered down Sunday social club religion but a transformation of our life from self-serving to Christ following. The cost is everything – just as it was for Jesus – the reward even greater.

So when we obey Jesus' command to "make disciples" sooner or later we must share the Cross. Maybe not as the first item of business but certainly in the way we live our lives and ultimately when we talk about salvation. Paul was able to say in 1 Cor 2:2 that he was determined to "know" nothing else but Jesus and him crucified when with the people of Corinth, he certainly wasn't going to shy away from the Cross.

What results from the Cross is the fulfilment of the Good News. Jesus said "It is finished" as he breathed his last and what happens next is up to the Father who by the Spirit raises Jesus from the dead in acceptance of his willing and perfect sacrifice. Jesus walks and talks with his friends, even Thomas the one who would not believe without first hand experience, then ascends in triumph into the heavens. For any who will identify with Jesus in his death there is also the joy of identifying with his resurrection too (Galatians 5:24, 25).

The cross will change you forever. Your perspective on life will change, your eternal situation will be resolved and the things you rejoice in and shout about will merge with those of Paul who said: *"May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world."* Galatians 6:14

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

In what ways do you find that people view the Cross a "stumbling block" or "foolishness"? How much of a barrier is that to sharing the Good News?

Read Gal 2:20. What are your experiences of "coming to the Cross"? How was your life changed?

Read 1 Cor 2:2. What do you think Paul meant by "knowing nothing but Jesus and him crucified"? How might this have been seen in what he taught and preached? How then should we shape how we disciple others?

Read Galatians 5:24, 25. How can we "keep in step with the Spirit"?

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

Plan and organise activities for the Fun Day on May 27th. Report to Tony what you will do.