

Word Notes Sunday 14/05/17
Tony Hodge – Hot Topics: Sexuality

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: John 8:2-11

Human sexuality is always in the news it seems, with the Church or Christians often cast as the bad guy. The Bible is a book about people and our relationship with God. It includes human sex and sexuality as a clear theme, linking the physical and the spiritual through the language of marriage between a man and a woman, and expresses positive and negative aspects of our sexuality as God's design is played out through the filter of our fleshly desires.

Too often the Bible's message is used to point a wagging finger, just as the teachers of the Law and Pharisees did in Jesus' time. Jesus counters with a challenge, silencing the accusers but he doesn't allow us to just do as we please. He brings grace and compassion for the woman, while knowing all around were no different and so his words are for them as much as for her. The accusers are challenged to examine themselves, she on the other hand was challenged to – "go and sin no more".

Whether you take a strict Bible view of sexuality or a more progressive one, Jesus is clear that we must look to our own failures before condemning others (Matt 7:4) and makes clear that we can't get away with even a lustful thought (Matt 5:27-30) if we consider ourselves able to judge another in this area.

Jesus' message of Good News is for all. How do we emulate him and express God's love and compassion while keeping hold of our revelation of truth?

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

Read Luke 19:1-10. What does verse 3 tell you about Zacchaeus? Is he anything more than a curious member of the crowd? Why does Jesus single him out?
How often are you tempted to make a similar judgement to the people in verse 7?

The woman in Luke 7:36-39 is referred to in some translations as a prostitute but the key fact is she was a "sinner" or "heathen", someone rejected by society. What would your reaction be to a respected Christian who has close friendships with those some would consider that way? Should we as a church be welcoming to all and how do we value people who hold strongly different positions to us?

Theologians of all persuasions will debate the merits of a "traditional" versus "progressive" interpretation of the Bible on sexuality but what does that mean at the coal-face of everyday life? What will win people to Christ and what planks in your eye might get in the way?

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

This Year's Fun Day is once again in partnership with Studlands Residents Association under the name "Party on the Green – June in Bloom". We will once more provide bouncy castles (booked) music (Andrew Parker and C3 Youth Band) and a Café. Your help is needed to set up and run the Café, we'll need gazebo set up for band and café, carrying tables from NCC to the green, people to serve refreshments and gifts of cakes. Please talk about what your cell can do and let Tony know.