

iii) God's power to live a new Life

'I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me' Gal 2:20

'for it is God who is at work in you, enabling you both to will and to work for his good pleasure.' Phil 2:13 NRSV

'I can do all things through him who strengthens me.' Phil 4:13 NRSV

Forgiveness and the end of an old life is wonderful but there's more!

God offers us a new life – Christ himself living in us – that's good news indeed!

Imagine again the person you've been praying for, how would it be for them to know Christ himself living in their heart.

Christ himself helping them with their challenges and fears, day by day as they grow in relationship with him.

This is the power of the Gospel – 'Christ in us, the hope of glory' Col 1:27.

The Gospel is not just for people who are struggling, it's for people who want to live in the fullness and freedom of life that God intended for them.

With Christ in us we become people who can make a difference and attempt the impossible, who 'can do all things through Christ who strengthens us.'

People aren't looking for the perfect person, they just want someone who's a few steps further along the journey than they are.

Will you be ready to share what you've found and help them find this life too?

Pause for Personal Prayer



Pause to believe again; 'Christ in you, the hope of glory'

Discuss



- How has 'Christ in you' been good news in your own life? Share.
- How have you or can you share this good news with others?

Taking it Further

- Take time each day to thank God for the good news that he's given you.
- Pray and look for helpful opportunities to share this good news with others.



2019 Watchword:

'I am not ashamed of the Gospel; it is God's power to save all who believe'
Romans 1:16



2: It is God's power to save all who believe

St Paul said:

'I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile' Romans 1:16

If somebody has cancer we don't just offer them aspirin - that only helps the symptoms.

So why when we see the desperate needs of people's lives do we offer them comfort, kind words, support but we don't offer the Gospel which is God's power to save?

When Paul said 'I am not ashamed of the gospel', he had confidence that it was God's power to save and transform lives. He was so convinced that in Corinth he decided to speak of nothing else 'except Jesus Christ and him crucified' 1 Corinthians 2:2.

May we become so convinced of the power of the Gospel today to save and change lives that we become as passionate as Paul to share the good news we've found with;

Every person who has turned from God and can't find the way home.

Every broken and hurting heart.

Every struggling marriage and family.

Every seemingly content person who just doesn't know that there's more!

A suggested outline for the session

Open with worship and prayer

Divide your time between the 3 sections

In each of the 3 sections ...

. Ask someone to read the scripture & reflection

. Pause for a few minutes of personal prayer

. Then discuss the questions given

. At the end allow 10mins for personal prayer

i) God's power to save us from sin

'wash me, and I will be whiter than snow.' *Psalm 51:7*

'We died to sin ... knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin. For he who has died has been freed from sin.' *Romans 6:2,6*

'Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more.' *John 8:11*

Forgiveness is powerful - it allowed David (an adulterer and murderer) to come to his senses, repent and start again with God.

A friend of mine was asked in Strangeways Prison, 'Is there any sin God can't forgive?' 'Oh yes' my friend said 'the one that is not confessed'.

Our world desperately needs to hear the good news of forgiveness, not a dumbed down gospel where sin doesn't matter but a clear Gospel which addresses sin and gives the way of repentance and forgiveness.

But there's more than that - our sin has power to hurt us and others. Someone who has truly seen the effect of their sin will want to change.

In Christ 'We have died to sin' Rms 6:2. The sin that once held our lives and kept us as its slaves no longer has that power for those who are in Christ. We can still sin if we want to but now we have a choice.

'Knowing this ...' Rms 6:6 is a journey for every Christian as we learn to know this truth but the power of the Gospel is that we are 'freed from sin'.

The world doesn't expect us to be perfect but they will listen as they see ordinary people whose lives are being changed by God day by day.

Will you be one of them?



ii) God's power to save us from death

'there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus' *Romans 8:1*

'Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here' *2 Corinthians 5:17*

'For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption' *Col 1:13,14*

Imagine helping someone to know that there's a way for them never to feel condemned again – either by God, themselves or others.

Imagine them seeing for the first time that real change is possible, from the inside. That's it's possible for them to begin a whole new life.

Imagine them believing and accepting Christ.

Imagine them knowing that their old life 'has gone, the new has come'.

That they now have a place in the Kingdom, in the Father's house (Jn 14:2).

Wouldn't that be good news that's worth hearing and sharing!

The truth is that this is the power of the Gospel for each of our lives.

As Christians we're on a journey of knowing and believing this good news for ourselves, but we can share the little that we've learnt – that's good news.

People aren't looking for the finished article - that's too daunting! - they want to hear about real faith from real people who are still learning.

Will you be one of them?



Pause for Personal Prayer



Are there areas where you want God to change you?

Discuss



- Do you think people really want to change? Do you?
- What does it mean that we 'died to sin & are no longer slaves of sin'?
- If we're still learning to 'know this' freedom from sin, can we be a credible witness to the Gospel? If so, how?

Pause for Personal Prayer



What change have you seen in yourself as you've walked with God?

Discuss



- From all the 'imagines' above – what has your own experience been?
- Have you seen people come to Christ and know real change? – share.
- Are people looking or the finished article or for someone like you?